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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for use by older beginning writers and visual artists. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to the complexities of the creative process. The document is a guide to opening and using the creative process in the later years of life. It is arranged in chapters that take the student through a learning process. Exercises to help begin and develop the creative process are provided. The exercises are for writing and drawing, but each chapter also includes physical exercises for developing flexibility of body and mind. The first exercise is the keeping of a 'doodle diary' for jotting down words, phrases, sentences, or making a quick sketch with pencil or pastels. Guidelines for using the book include: (1) trust your perception of what is right for you; (2) respect your own creativity; (3) give yourself permission to play and even to be foolish; (4) do the suggested exercises; (5) choose your tools carefully; (6) do not be afraid of seeing the world in a new way; and (7) keep the channel open, without stopping to criticize yourself while you are in process. Chapters discuss the language of lines or selecting words to express feelings and experiences, and the development of creativity. One chapter is devoted to haiku, a form of Japanese poetry, which attempts to capture the essential, the whatness of a thing, the primary quality that expresses its uniqueness, a way of seeing as well as a way of saying and writing. Instructions for pulling together the previous suggestions show how different approaches transform the same subject. (DK)

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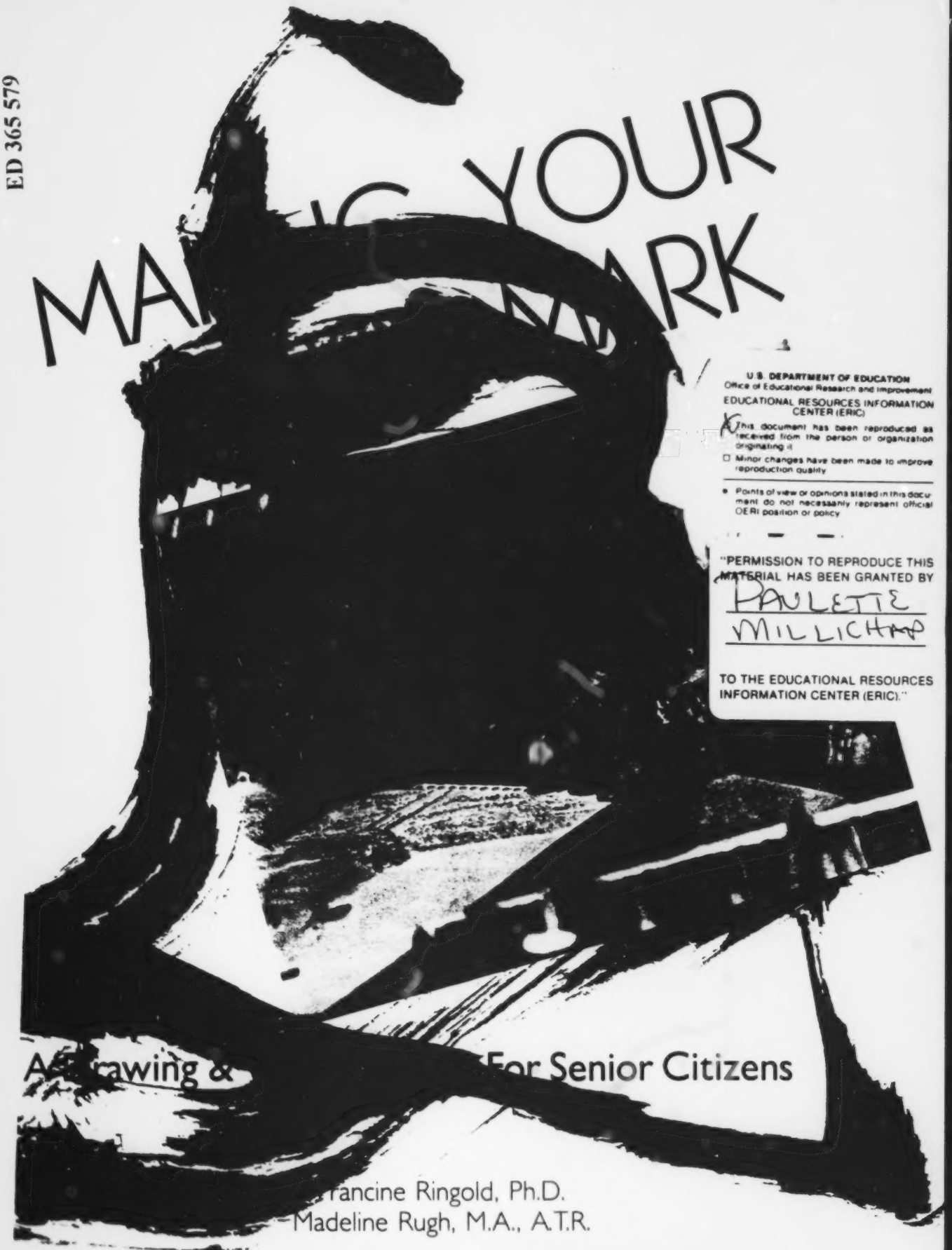

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[illegible]rancine Ringold, Ph.D.
Madeline Rugh, M.A., A.T.R.

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MAKING YOUR OWN MARK

A Drawing & Writing Guide for Senior Citizens

Francine Ringold, Ph.D.
Madeline Rugh, M.A., A.T.R.

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"The instinct to create remains as long as one breathes," said Isaac Bashevis Singer. This book is devoted to nurturing that instinct and to the passionate, lively, knowing and caring writers and visual artists who are now making their mark at 60, 70, 80, 90 and beyond.

Francine Ringold, Ph.D.
Madeline M. Rugh, M.A., A.T.R.

This is a self-directed study and practice guide for you adults interested in finding ways to share your personal experiences and discover your creative abilities. It focuses on drawing with suggested parallels for writing. Feel free to try any of the ideas presented in any medium you like. We suggest alternating the writing and drawing. One opens the way for the other. Then try the same ideas in collage and then in painting.

Painting is the most complicated and benefits from the experience gained in writing, drawing and collage making.

But for now — to begin — all you will need is paper, pen, pencil, or chalk; time, memory, observation — and a bit of daring . . . .

Acknowledgments

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All the photographs, unless otherwise identified, were created by Doug Henderson, free-lance photographer, owner of Forensic Photography, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Doug's sensitivity to the moment and to people is a constant for which we are also grateful.

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Preface

"The final form, the natural form, of our life's repertoire, must be art," says Dr. Oliver Sacks, Professor of Clinical Neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Yet, many of us feel cut off from that largely dramatic, ionic, natural, and inevitable expression of the body and brain's record.

We have found that by once again engaging the physical, by restoring or reenergizing the link between the body and cognitive learning, between bodily knowledge as experience, and embodied thought, memory and the imaginative capacity, we restore the ground under our feet. Only then, like a dancer, can we push off and leap into performance — only then can we make our mark! This book is intended for use by the beginning writer and visual artist and is in no way intended to be a comprehensive guide to the complexities of the creative process. Yet, we have been told, even advanced writers and painters have found some of our suggestions helpful as they too seek to continue to explore — into age — the mysteries and the joys of making art.

"When I am too old to hold a pencil,
tie it to my hand . . .
so I can reach a story,
Or each hill in the sunset."

Mary Granger
Center for the Physically Limited
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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A Voyage of Discovery

Creating a drawing or painting or writing a poem or story — like life itself, is a voyage of discovery. Writers and artists do not emerge in full flower; they grow and develop slowly with care and training. At first, they begin in darkness, even in chaos, in a confusion of ideas and emotion and experience. . . . Slowly, they find a way to select and arrange the materials of life experience so those materials emerge not in the jumble that we confront in everyday life but in a shape, a form, a gift of line or language we can pass on to someone else.

At an older age, particularly, we often feel compelled — not by someone else but by our inner thoughts and feelings — to write, to draw, to paint what we have seen and what we are trying still to understand. Old age is our destiny and it may become our greatest privilege. Now we have time to discover, time to reflect, time to grow. To make art is to make life more meaningful — to see it whole.

But first there must be a beginning!

Keep a "Doodle Diary!"

A "doodle diary" is simply a book (spiral?, cloth-bound?, unlined?) in which you will jot down words, phrases, sentences or make a quick sketch with pencil or pastels. Be sure to choose your "doodle diary" carefully. **Search until you find one that pleases you.** Do you like its shape? Is it light enough? Small enough? Large enough? Try to find one with unlined paper or if you like the control of lines for your writing, try a loose-leaf book and alternate lined and unlined paper.

Be someone on whom nothing is lost!

In your "doodle diary" you might place:

a fleeting thought
a word you like
each color in a fall leaf
a phrase or sentence that you have overheard
a quotation from a book you are reading or have read
a startling image
a memory
a stream of thoughts . . . one after the other . . .
the sound of a flock of birds
the movement of a cloud
the pattern of a wet spiderweb
the shape of a nose

You need not write full sentences or draw complete pictures in your "doodle diary;" you need not worry about spelling or punctuation or drawing objects that look real or finished. Your "doodle diary" is your book of pieces of things — a dried flower, a broken chain, a photograph, a piece of ribbon, a snatch of a dream. . . .

Be sure to add something — even if it is only one word or one line — **add *something* to your diary every day.**

As you progress in your writing and drawing, you will dip into this "diary" for ideas, for beginnings, for words, lines, shapes and textures. Sometimes by merely flipping the pages and choosing at random, an entire poem or drawing may come into focus.

There may be a struggle, a constant series of trials and errors, until we make the one stroke that is sure, the one line that causes us to shout — "whoopee! Now I've got it!"

A famous writer once said:

> Even now I do not consider myself a writer in the ordinary sense of the word. I am a man telling the story of his life, a process which appears more and more inexhaustible as I go on. . . . I am digging deeper and deeper into life, digging deeper and deeper into past and future. . . . Often I put down things which I do not understand myself — I permit myself to doodle — secure in the knowledge that later my notes and doodles will become clear and meaningful to me.

Through imperfection, through jotting down bits and pieces, by sketching a line here, a circle there, by crossing out, revising, reshaping — he is finding his life, the story he has to tell. But he knows too that life, daily life, is not quite firm enough. It slips from the page. **We have to learn how to grab life and set it down so that it will last.** That's what your "doodle diary" is for.

Keep the following guidelines firmly in mind.

Trust your perception of what is right for you. Rely on your body, mind and spirit, rely on your whole self to let you know what is meaningful for you in your exploration into the arts.

Respect your own creativity. Don't contrast or even compare your way to someone else's. Do not think in terms of "better," or "worse."

Give yourself permission to play and even to be foolish. You may be surprised at how much you can learn, quite by accident, while you are playing.

Do the suggested exercises; before long you will invent your own ways to begin and to continue . . .

Choose your tools carefully. The tools of your trade: the diary, pencil, pen, brush, typewriter, computer, voice-recorder should be comfortable in size and shape for you. Be choosy. This may seem minor but it is very important!

Don't be afraid of seeing the world in a new way.

Keep the channel open: Don't stop to criticize yourself while you are in process. Keep moving. Keep writing. Keep drawing. Stay alive to the world within and without. Revision comes later.

At 89, Martha Graham, renowned dancer and choreographer, was still practicing her creative leaps. Agnes DeMille, Graham's junior by ten years, and also a famous dancer and choreographer, was going through a period of self-doubt when Graham wrote to her:

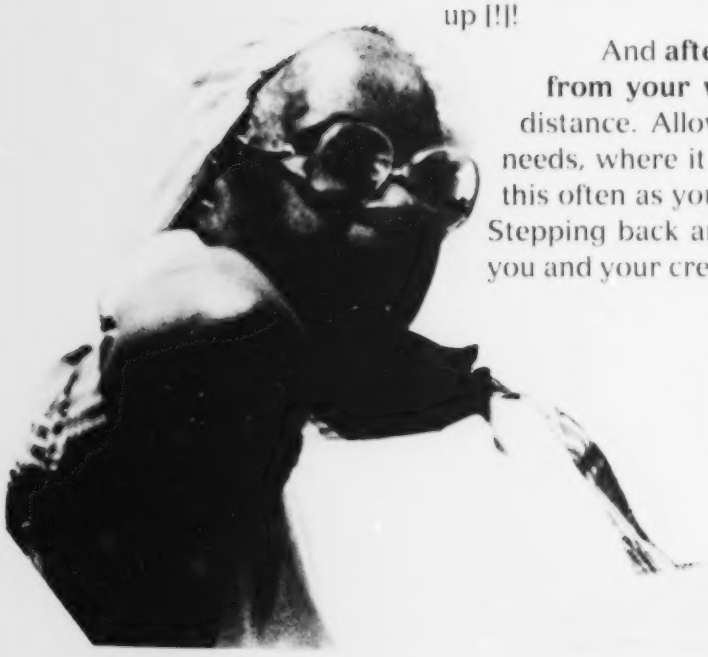
> There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And, if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is; nor how valuable it is; nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly — to keep the channel open!

The Tape Recorder Can Be Your Best Friend

When, in the course of writing, your hand hurts or you feel cramped up inside, **try speaking into a small tape recorder.** Tell the recorder your thoughts, your words, your memories, your dreams — your poems and stories. You may hesitate or stop or revise as you go. Later someone — you or another person — will take dictation from the recorder, jotting down the full sentences and the painful pauses and revisions. From these jottings, first recorded, then marked on paper, you can select, trim, revise, restitch. **You've gotten it out. The rest is easy!**

The tape recorder can be your best friend. Hug it to you! It's worth a little time and trouble at the beginning.

After you have written, always **step back from your work** by **reading it out loud.** You will hear where to make changes: where to put a full stop, a period [.], where a shorter pause, created by a comma [,] will do, where an exclamation point will pep things up [!]!



And **after you have drawn** or painted also **step back from your work.** Look at what you have made from a distance. Allow the image to speak to you about what it needs, where it feels complete, where it desires change. Do this often as you work and when you think you are finished. Stepping back and looking keeps the channel open between you and your creation.

The Idea of Exercise

What do we mean by Exercise? We mean that you are going to be asked to flex your body-muscles and your mental-muscles. The exercises are a beginning — a way to get started. Just as the ballet dancer and the football player need warm-ups and daily routine exercise to keep the juices flowing and the muscles in good shape, the creative artist needs to flex all of her/his muscles — mind and body — so that each part becomes a means of expression, an instrument for action. So, please, at least in the beginning, try to follow suggestions carefully — no matter how strange they seem.

(Though the physical exercises, like the writing and drawing exercises, are not intended to be rigorous, each person must determine his or her level of participation. Never strain. If you have any doubt as to whether or not you should do a particular exercise, please consult your physician.)

Will these exercises work? They have before — many, many times. **Remember, the object, in the beginning, is only to do, not to be great or even good — just to do!**

Inspiration: Breathing In and Out

physical

Inspiration means not just receiving a flash of insight or vision but breathing in, inspiring! We help to stimulate the intellectual and emotional faculties by breathing in, by inhaling, by inspiring. Eventually, you probably will not need a **physical exercise** or a doodling exercise to start the creative juices flowing. You will find your own tricks: a short solitary walk, a cup of tea, pacing. . . . But for now, as you begin to follow this guide, when a physical exercise is suggested preceding a writing or drawing exercise — don't brush it off! You **create with your whole body,** not just with your mind and fingertips.

Sit comfortably in a chair with your hands in your lap and your eyes closed . . . follow your thoughts for a moment without judging them.

Gradually begin to pay attention to your breathing. With your eyes still closed, experience the air moving in and out of your nostrils or mouth. Be aware of the whole process: inhalation — pause — exhalation. Breathe deeply and slowly.

Count your breathing — one *inhalation,* two *exhalation* — up to 10 and start over. Do this a few times until you are very relaxed.

Now allow your attention to spread; gently relax your eyes and let your mind go blank . . . if thoughts come, follow them slowly, and gradually return to silence.

Try this exercise for five to 15 minutes until you feel refreshed and calm but very alert to the present. You may now wish to begin an art experience.

If at any time during this work you feel tense, repeat the process briefly or take a few deep, slow breaths.

> For me, creation first starts by contemplation and I need long, idle hours of meditation. It is then that I work the most. I look at flies, at flowers, at leaves and trees around me. I let my mind drift at ease, just like a boat in the current. Sooner or later, it is caught by something, it takes shape . . .
>
> —Pablo Picasso

Observing A Master

For this exercise, you will need to locate a drawing or painting in an art magazine or an old book. Do the same with a book of poetry; a published diary, or a novel. Seek the best.

Select a picture or a poem that really interests you, cut it out and mount it, or keep it in a folder or tucked between the pages of your "doodle diary," or even fold it up and put it in your pocket or purse.

Carry it with you at all times. Live with the drawing or written word — look at it first thing in the morning and before you go to bed.

Study the work; try to find out all you can about it. Allow yourself to experience it fully; **write about** your thoughts and feelings about this picture or poem in your "doodle book." **Sketch** some part of the picture or poem that intrigues or mystifies you.

Introduce the picture to your friends; ask for their response to it. As in life, your friends may see strengths and weaknesses that you had not noticed. You are free to agree or disagree; your feelings about the work may begin to change for the better or worse.

See if you can probe beyond the surface and get into the subtle, hidden, intimate parts of the life of the work, just as you might probe the inner life of a friend or a lover . . . to know and understand them better.

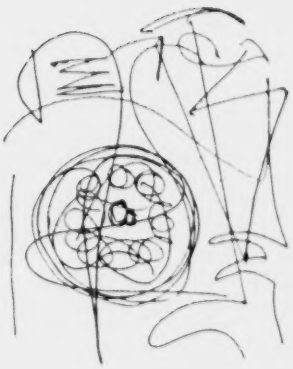
Do this for a week, then **choose another** painting or drawing, poem, or paragraph from a book written by an established artist. This time, however, choose one **that you do not understand** or have a negative response to, and repeat the steps listed above: **study; write about; sketch; discuss; probe.**

Expressive Doodles

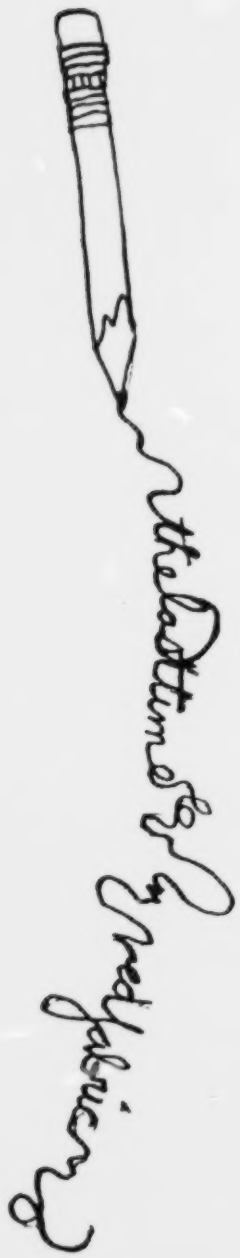
Streams of Ink and Mind

doodling For this exercise, you will need your doodle book and any kind of marking tool, pencils, crayons, pen and ink, chalk, sponges, etc.

Do not try to draw a picture. With marking tool in hand, just let your hand move in any way it likes as it marks. Let your eye follow, but do not interpret what you see or call it by a name, even if your doodles begin to look recognizable. *Try this again, letting your hand move to the rhythm of different kinds of music, and see what happens.*



We often think of doodling, like scribbling, as a childish activity. Actually it is childlike, but not childish. Childlike activity



allows playful examination; we discover what tools and materials can do, how different marks look and feel, what they might become, what we like the best . . . a kind of stream-of-consciousness or unconscious movement.

NOW: *Try doodling with string dipped in ink,* dragging it around on a piece of paper to music. Stop, and turn the paper in several directions until you see an image. Now use any colors or other mediums you like to bring out or highlight what you see in the doodles. This is a simple and excellent way to begin to develop your imagination through art.

writing Just as you let the pencil drift in your hand, just as the string dipped in paint or ink could etch a pattern of lines that was a scan of mind and movement, so too words, falling as they come, without effort or predetermination, can create the feeling of the subtle and shifting workings of mind.

This **stream of consciousness** will be a useful writing tool: the reader approaching these seemingly casually fallen words — words without apparent sequence or logical plan . . . these words that shift subject, that dart or droop — the reader is convinced that here is a mind at work:

> . . . the sunshine on the sill, slanting like a broken branch and me here, yes, books stacked, mountains and the marred chair even that . . . tomorrow perhaps, I'll see to it, warming the room with sunlight, yes . . . Maureen said Mercy, I'll see to that too if it's not too cold . . . whining she was, chattering like a magpie, always . . . sun, she needs some of that . . . cockatiels perhaps and purple orchids . . . that might do it for a start . . . can't let on . . . ironing to be done today, he said. Not likely! I'll pour a bit of the sun on those shirts . . . heat 'em flat . . .

Letting your mind stream, letting the words that flow in that stream drop to the page is also a way of discovering useful material to write about at another time in, perhaps, a more conventional and orderly and even punctuated way.

When the writer above first let the sunshine fall on her paper, did she know it would lead to the ironing — the resentment? "Not likely!"

Every day, let your mind and your pencil drift onto the pages of your "doodle diary," your journal, your "secret" book. For at least three minutes, merely write down what you are thinking, what catches your eye; write every sigh, every breath, every smell. Let the pages warm to the beams from your mind/hand/senses/stomach/heart.

The Language of Lines

drawing To begin, you will need a few BIG sheets of paper, such as newsprint, and pastel chalks — any color or colors.

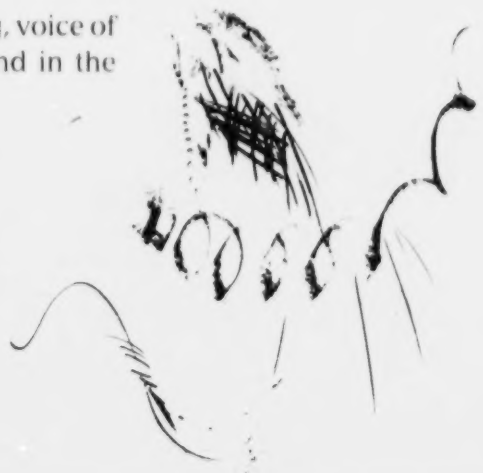
Quickly **create a line or mark** (try not to make well-known and overused symbols such as hearts, rainbows, happy faces). Now **this will be easier.** We will give you a word or a phrase. **Respond to each word or phrase with a line or a number of lines, marks or shapes** . . . how you feel and think about the words we suggest. Let your marks be bold and free. **Experiment!** Try different ways of holding the chalk — twist, turn, stab, jab, push, pull, move quickly, move slowly; press very hard, barely touch the paper. Ready?

Make a mark or a series of lines that represent:

Sounds: rain on the rooftop, a bird twittering, voice of a friend, children laughing at play; thunder, wind in the trees.

Touch: feeling of soft fur, prick of a pin, a cold shower, an itch, a soft breeze on your face, feeling of a cat's tongue.

Movement: sensation of running, sitting down in a comfortable chair, reaching toward a high shelf, kicking a can, swinging.

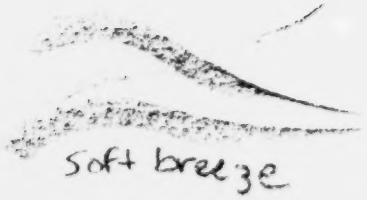


Make a mark or a series of lines that represent:

Taste: the taste of a lemon, taste of black pepper, taste of chocolate, taste of salt, taste of toothpaste.

Smell: the smell of bacon frying, smell of roses on a warm summer day, smell of freshly mown grass or hay, smell of gasoline, smell of burning leaves in the fall.

Feelings: the feeling of hunger, the feeling of extreme fatigue, the sensation of a cough, feeling lonely, feeling shocked, feeling loved, feeling sad, the feeling of awakening.



Finished? NOW . . . Look at all your marks.

Select your favorite mark. **Pay no attention to the meaning of the word used to prompt the mark — just pick the mark you really like.** In your doodle book, **reproduce this mark or line in several sizes.**

Or use collage materials, pieces of tissue, paste and paint **to reproduce the mark.** Then work in some tiny details with pencil or pen and ink. Give your picture an unexpected name.

You are discovering how simple lines and marks can convey very complicated information. Notice how changing the medium (from chalk to ink to paint) affects how the marks feel or look.

Discuss these changes with someone else or with an art group. If you have made something realistic or recognizable with your marks, do not concern yourself with whether or not your mark "looks like the real thing."

Discuss or talk about the qualities or "personalities" of the lines, colors, and shapes, how they may be happy lines or fat lines or pleasing shapes or angry marks.

Clelia Price, Miami, Oklahoma

writing **Poetry too is made of lines of different lengths and expressive possibilities.** Some lines are whole sentences, some are not. When lines in succession are short and end with a period, they tend to create a choppy rhythm or a feeling of arrested motion. This is true when the words that fill these lines are short and the predominant sound patterns are composed of letters that one tends to hit and drop as we speak them, such as **t** and **d** and **p**: "**Fat Mat Hit Pat!**" When several long undulating lines — broken only by commas, for example — follow each other, and the sound patterns that linger are filled with long **o**s or long **a**s or other sounds that linger in the mouth, such as **m** and **n**, the rhythm tends to slow: "**O**bese **Matthew** pu**mm**eled Patricia — frequ**en**tly."

What are the words for laughing?

guffaw

titter

giggle

hoot

Exercise: Quickly respond to these suggestions by writing a series of words, a line, sentence, or phrase or two that conveys the feeling of:

walking briskly on a marble sidewalk in high-heeled shoes
walking softly and slowly in the grass in sneakers
patting a dog lovingly
moving through the jungle
crying
laughing

In each case, try to **make the sounds of the words and the length of the line or sentence respond to the inner rhythm and feel of the subject.** Don't forget the power of using hissing **s**s; and the **wind** of a **whispering wash** of **white willows** . . . bending in the summer storm.

Remember: **a line in poetry does not have to be a full sentence.** You can "run on*" from one line to the next before ending the sentence, and can even end a sentence midline. Thus, you have more rhythmic control. Even the fact that a line ends on the page — without any punctuation — causes a slight hesitation or pause. You also can control rhythm by using punctuation effectively. Sometimes a semicolon will be as appropriate as a period and will not cause as long a pause or stop; a colon will help indicate that there is a list to follow: slow; speed; or "lazy" down your loving pace as you dream it, as you breathe it. **You are in control of your language and your line.**

**A run-on line in poetry (enjambment) is not the same as a run-on sentence in prose writing — which is a "no-no."*

March, Lake Hudson

i am watching myself
watch the river.
i am sitting on a grassy bank
with the sun warm on my back
i am holding my back
erect and straight as my head
motionless as a deer.
my hat with the blue ribbon
nests in the grass
the boat
its oars trailing
bumps against the bank.
i do not move:
the house is upside down
a bird is in the water
the brown roof is in the water
and it is watched.
Surely someone will come
the pale figure across the bay? . .
i do not move
the mountain is in the water too
and the sun is hot
soon i will undo my blouse
the breeze touches me
the water
there is no need to shimmer and glow
no one is here
the oars drift
i hold on
float away
return.
if i reach the shore
there is only me watching
me.
lift me up and out.

—Francine Leffler

Note how author has not used any capital letters: i for I, for example. Why do you think she decided to omit capitals? Was it a good decision?

Run-on line, not a run-on sentence.

Notice how the word bump has two sounds that do bump against each other m and p. Are there any other words in this poem whose sounds help tell you what they mean?

Do the line lengths and breaks here have any effect?

Why did author put a period here?

- Read your writing out loud.
- Step back from your drawing. Look at it from every angle.
- Use a tape-recorder to free you.
- Use old paper, scraps, different sizes of paper — be free.
- **The line** in a drawing **does *not* have to lead you to a realistic image,** an image that "looks exactly like" what you have chosen to depict.
- **Poetry does *not* have to rhyme!**

Rhyming is fun, it makes a piece of writing seem to "hang together." It makes it easier to remember. "Ring around the Rosie, a pocketful of posies" is easier to remember than "Let's make a circle around Rosie, scattering a pocketful of flowers." (The rhymed way also creates a skipping rhythm.)

Or consider this by John Crowe Ransom:

> There was such speed in her little *body,*
> And such lightness in her footfall,
> It is no wonder her brown *study*
> Astonishes us all.

In this verse from "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," the rhyming pattern is every other line and "footfall" does rhyme with "all," but note that "body" and "study" though they do rhyme, do not rhyme in so absolute a fashion. When we rhyme body/study, or leaves/lives, or little/scuttle, we are using what is called "half-rhyme" or "slant-rhyme" or "para-rhyme." This partial rhyming has the binding powers of absolute rhyme but it is more interesting, permits more variety, and tends to create a less sing-song effect.

So, if you choose to rhyme, **remember the possibilities of partial rhyme** and don't be forced into a pattern of: mat, fat, hat, scat, cat.

And, remember, that **your poem does not have to rhyme.**

Just as the line length is a flexible tool for expression, so is the patterning, and the choice to rhyme or not to rhyme. Read your work out loud and see the effect you have achieved. Decide whether or not you wish to change, to adjust, to make the line more "primly propped," or "softly flowing like baby's kisses." **The form of a poem need only make the content more clear, seem to adhere to the content like a skin.** Rhythm, sound patterns, line length, denotative meaning — all come together — are one!

People Making

Since good writing means making pictures in someone else's head, making an image come alive for the reader, **good writing means using your whole body.**

Ego-Tripping

physical Put on some power music, something with a strong beat. Using the music to propel you, walk across the room with your head high, shoulders back, chest forward, chin up. Walk as briskly as you can and as firmly. If you cannot walk or are in a wheelchair, still lift your head high, round back your shoulders — do anything which makes you feel upright and strong: make a fist; lift your leg; make large circles in the air with your arm.

Now you are ready!

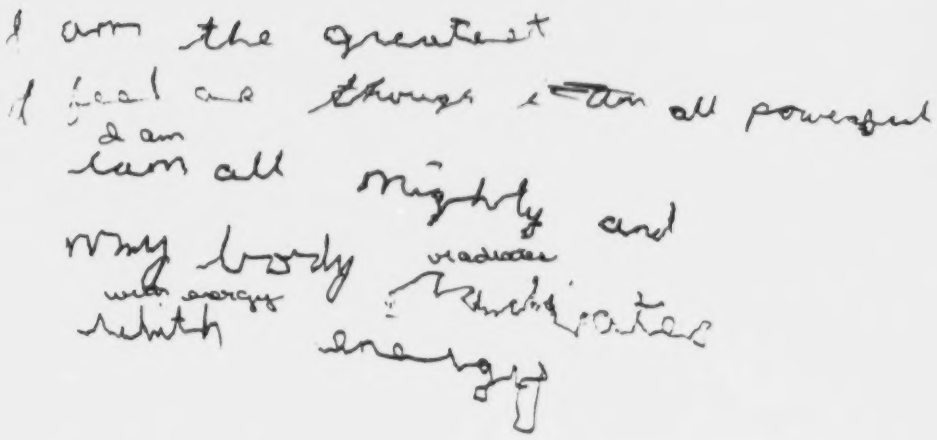
writing You are going to write a description of yourself — bigger than you are . . . GREATER . . . **MORE POWERFUL,** more special, **more beautiful,** more intelligent . . . more, more, **More, MORE!** And you are going to make the reader believe you are even more than you are by exaggerating and by comparing: "I am **like** a cat;" or "I am **as** high **as a** mountain, **as** bright **as a** star . . . " etc.

You will be using **metaphor,** comparing two things usually thought to be dissimilar, by using "like" or "as" or by putting those two things right up against each other: "She is like a cat" becomes "**She is a cat.**" You will also be using a device called hyperbole. This is just for your information. Don't be concerned with terminology — EXAGGERATE!

Take each body-part, each particle of mind and spirit and compare it to something even grander, something your readers will recognize like the Eiffel Tower, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Mississippi River, or a midsummer storm . . . or fire . . .

I am the greatest
I feel as though I am all powerful
I am all mighty and my body
radiates with energy.
My eyes burn like fire.
But still, I am so gentle
the animals are my friends.
I am at peace with nature.
The world is my playground.

Corky Callison
Gatesway Foundation
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.



I am black satin . . . flowing like a ballet dancer.
The Moon is out. I am a star.

Rebecca Codd
Jeltz Senior Center
Oklahoma City

I am a blue satin tree in the morning . . .
There are red apples on me.
I am the spring.

Johnnie Beard, Jr.
Jeltz Senior Center

And if your native language is other than English, and you feel larger and more important when using your native language — **Do it!**

Later you or another may, if you wish, translate your words into English.

Hanashimásu Nihongo?

Parla italiano?

Habla español?

Parlez-vous français?

Autumn

I no longer belong to the tender green
No longer can hear the chirring of mid-summer cicadas.
Like a dry yellow leaf
listening to the rattling autumn wind.
O, the golden is fading
Heavy fruits are fallen to the dust
the gleam of life is darkening into shadow.
I can hear the footsteps of winter,
I will be buried by snow.
As the setting sun that still glows,
I will paint maple leaves red for the world.

Sun Jin-xuan
Translated by
Xu Yaoping &
Manly Johnson
Nimrod: China Today

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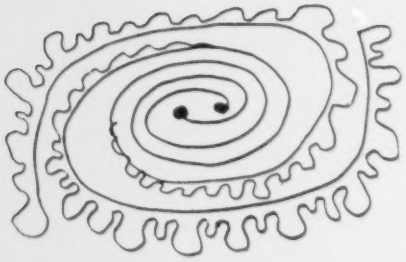
"Me" Cards: Marks of the Inner You



What is the purpose of a portrait? Is it to capture the exact likeness of a person? Or is it just as important, perhaps even more important to capture the **inner qualities** that make us who we are? And, if your answer to this last question is, as we hope it will be — yes! — then how do we depict those qualities in visual art?

Now that you've learned to create a bold image of yourself in writing, it will be easy to create a visual portrait, but this time concentrating on **the inner you — not bragging or exaggerating.**

drawing Using the information you've gained about the infinite variety of expressive markings that are available to you, let's personalize the process, using your marks to develop a portrait of the inner you.

Get a pack of small unlined index cards or cut up a stack of paper into card-size rectangles (about 2" x 3"). Use colored markers, chalk, oil pastels, paint, or even torn paper and glue to mark these cards according to the following directions:

Quickly make **one symbol or mark on each card** to represent a different aspect of who you are as a person. For example: humorous, shy, talkative, open, angry, tough, afraid, helpful, hardworking, etc.

(Once again, let your marks be original — no happy faces or butterflies.) **Use lines, shapes and colors to express who you are and your many qualities.** Each card should be very different from the other.

Make at least 10 cards and arrange them in front of you in any order. **Select the one that you like best** because of its **shape** or **unusual line,** not because of what it represents. Now **select one that you like the least** or select a line that is somehow confusing or unclear to you.

In your doodle book or on a larger sheet of paper, **using different materials than those you used to make the cards,** enlarge or blow up and combine the two cards — the ones you like best and least — to form a new picture. If you used chalk on original cards, use paint or pencil; if you used pencil, use chalk or paint, etc.

This is your first **self-portrait,** made of colors, lines and shapes (not a photographic or realistic representation). What do you see and think about this "inner" portrait?

writing

Words too are symbols (a combination of marks or letters): they **stand for** the "real" thing — a "table," a "chair" — or a word may stand for an abstract idea such as "spirit" or "thought." Try using the "Me Cards" approach with words this time.

Put a word or phrase for different aspects of **you** on cards, one aspect or descriptive trait to each card. Make at least 20 cards and include not just descriptive words — large, fat, skinny, gentle, etc. — but also **details** which **define your particular quality** and tell us a lot about you. For example: smokes a lot; snakes around; whispers when she speaks; is sunny; is sad.

What is the central action of your life?

What is your favorite **color?** Put it on a card.

Do you usually **carry something,** a purse, a briefcase, a cane? **Write it on a card.**

Don't forget a bump on your nose or a hair hanging from your chin.

What action is representative of, or central to your life? Walks on tiptoe? Leaps? Crawls into a hole? Stalks? Flies? **Put your central action on a card.**

After you have marked down as many details about yourself as you can, shuffle the cards and read them in that order, then shuffle again. See if you can decide by shuffling and reshuffling the cards what emerges as your most unique or characteristic detail. Do you notice the color of your eyes first? Or, as you shuffle, do you always come up with flying images, or fat shapes? Don't force it. **Be free to play** with **your** cards and to **discover.**

Here is a poem written by a woman in a wheelchair who, despite her sedentary station, saw the "central action" of her life as — lifting off.

If I Could Fly

If I could fly
I would fly to the moon to see what's up there.
If I could fly
I would fly south to see what I could see.
In the south there is a golden sky.
there is a golden mountain there —
The golden mountain is hung with clouds
hung with the reflection of the sun
And the sun speaks
the sun says: "Here I am"
Bright and clear
the sun says "Good Morning" to me.

Mary Granger
Tulsa Center for Physically Limited

writing Now **select one detail or central action** and **expand** it on a big piece of paper, letting the poem, story or description that emerges from that detail define you and your life.

I Always Wanted to Dance

When I was a young girl
There was a guy that lived not too far from us
And he picked the gi-tar all the time.
I'd hear that music and want to dance.
I'd look around to see if them old folks
Were looking at me.
I wanted to join the Holiness Church
So I could dance.
I never could get the Holy Ghost.
All the other girls and boys,
They were fallin out, you know,
Gettin the Holy Ghost.
I never could get it
Because mine was for the wrong purpose, I guess.
I figured if I got sanctified and holy I'd be able to dance
And my parents wouldn't say anything about it.
But I never got it.
I never did dance.

Ruth Taylor
Carver Senior Citizen Center

Maxine Taylor, Miami, Oklahoma, collage

Your Landscape

drawing writing

Another way to approach "people-making" is to think of yourself metaphorically, to think of yourself in comparison to something else, as we did in ego-tripping, but this time there is no need to exaggerate. Make your comparison a clear and close identification. Try answering the following questions and putting each of your answers on a separate card. And **in addition to answering these questions in words — make a line, mark, shape,** or a number of lines and shapes **to answer the questions** — a separate answer on each card:

If you were a fabric or cloth, what kind would you most like to be?

If you were a time of day, what time would you be?

What season of the year do you resemble?

What natural sound are you most like? (rain? leaves rustling? thunder? wind?)

What natural object or animal are you like? (pebbles? tree bark? lizard?)

What holiday would you be?

What natural smell are you? (wet grass? apple blossoms? lemon?)

What would you taste like? (salty? sweet? bitter?)

What city would you be?

I am the Wind

No one has ever seen me.
When I send the kites high in the sky
You'll know that I am passing by.
Sometimes I am very mischievous.
I like to blow men's hats off their heads
and take them down the street a-flying
and blow around the corner of the house
for it sounds like someone dying.
I have so many different moods.
I am all power — there is no denying
I can send ships to the bottom of the sea
take the roof right off the house
and blow down giant trees.
Then I can be as gentle as a summer breeze
I can rock the flowers with the buzzing bees
and caress the leaves on the maple trees.
No one has ever seen me
but when I send things high in the sky
you know that I am passing by.

Clara Crussel
Tulsa Center for Physically Limited

NOW! Select several of your cards, the ones that are most pleasing to your eye, ear, and mind. Use these as a resource for a larger piece.

On a large fairly strong piece of paper, **make a composition from your cards.** Draw, paint, write, cut and glue. Use several different materials to create a collage: paper pieces of different shapes and textures, fabric, ribbon, string, feathers, shells, seeds, wildflowers, dried grasses. Also write some of your words on to the collage. **Experiment!**

By answering the above questions, selecting and arranging materials, you will create an **inner landscape,** a timescape, a tastescape that is a metaphor for you!

And from the verbal answers and fragments, you might, in addition, make a poem, like "I am the wind." or "there is a thunder in my chest."

A Trip with Tristan Tzara

Contracting and Releasing

This is an exercise we've found helpful to get the juices flowing in writing. But it is also an exercise in "formatting" a basic drawing and painting skill which we'll talk about later. You will not need a pencil or pen or word processor. All you need is a large piece of paper — at least 12" x 16", newsprint will be fine — a pair of scissors, some old magazines, a bit of glue or scotch tape . . . and a lot of flexibility. So first . . .

physical

Hold your arms out away from your body and take a few good relaxing inhalations and exhalations. Breathe comfortably. Don't force it. But do remember to breathe. (Sometimes, surprisingly, we forget. If I hold my breath, I stop "inspiration," I stop *inspiring*. Think about it.)

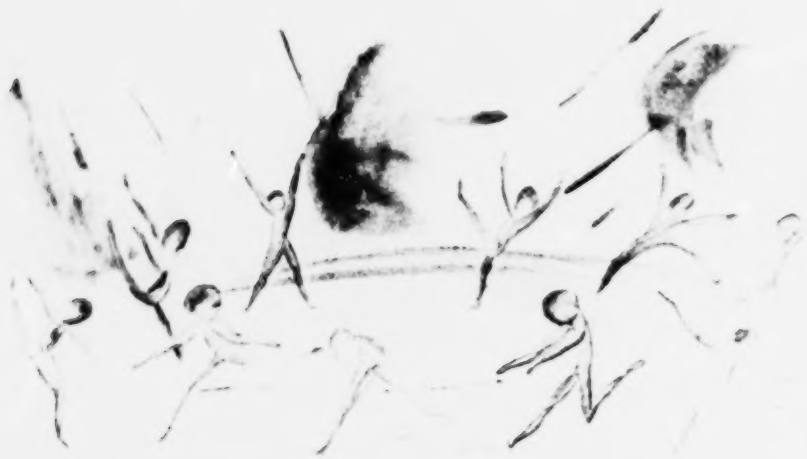
Now, **starting from your feet**, you are going to do just the opposite. You are going to **tighten up**, contract **each part of your body**, holding on to the contraction of one part as you move up the body to the next **until your whole body is one tight knot**. Ready?!

Contract your feet, really curl your toes and pull up your arches. Now hold your feet in that curled tight position and lock your knees. Hold tight both your feet and your knees and tighten your thighs. Now holding feet, knees, thighs — suck in your stomach and contract your lower back into a pelvic tilt, pull up your rib cage, tighten your arms, make a fist of your hands, scrunch down and tighten your neck; screw up and distort your face, tighten your eyes . . . hold it all . . . hold it!

NOW LET IT ALL GO . . . IN ONE BREATH . . . WHOOSH!!!!

Shake out every part of your body . . .

Let it all go: your thoughts of what is right, logical, proper releasing with your body.



Helen Barrett, Miami, Oklahoma, watercolor

Tristan Tzara, referred to in the title of this chapter, was the "father" of a movement in art known as Dadaism. He and his followers broke with tradition and this exercise is based on his work.

This exercise also illustrates the truism that often: **"We do our best work when we don't know what we are doing."**

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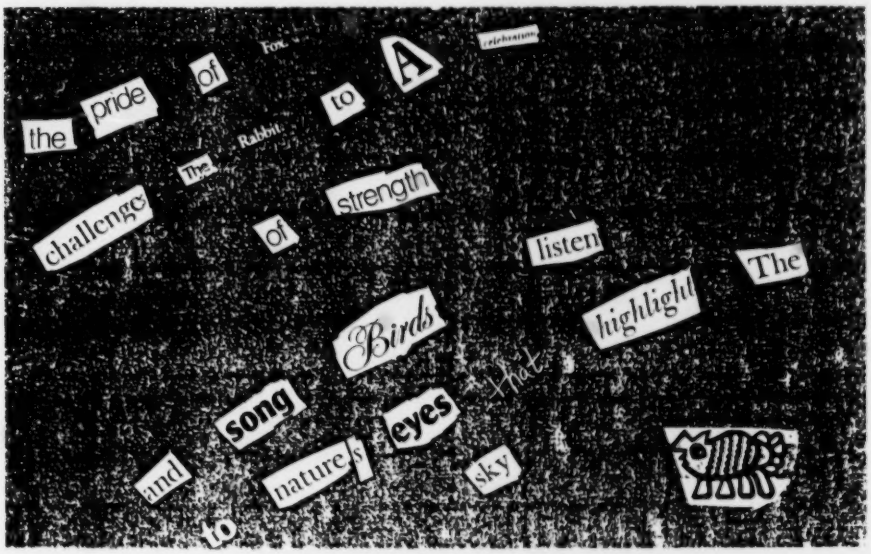
writing **Now to Begin.** Select and **cut out, at random,** phrases and words that strike you. Do **not** try to make these "cutouts" go together. It is preferable **not** to cut out whole sentences or paragraphs — just **words and phrases that appeal to you** for whatever reason. Cut out words in small type as well as those in bold large type (boldface is used most often for advertisements, and that might not be what you want to have in your cutout file all the time).

Select your "cutouts" **from old magazines** that **YOU read** or subscribe to. If you read or even just enjoy flipping through *House Beautiful, Time, People,* etc., but you also read *The American Scholar* occasionally, have at least one of each magazine on hand.

After you have **cut out at least 20 pieces, spread them out in front of you;** one will capture your attention and leap forward. That "piece" is the **seed** of your poem — that "piece" is where you will start. Place this "piece" on your large sheet of paper but **do**



not paste it down — not yet. Look at it from every angle. Move it around. Place it tentatively somewhere on your paper, knowing that you are free to move it as the process proceeds. Now begin the rest of the process of selection and arrangement: pick and choose from your other cut-up pieces and place them on the paper, making a design of words and meaning and space — arranging and rearranging until you are satisfied. Only then paste pieces on paper.

Remember, let surprises happen . . . all is not logic and system. **"Sometimes we do our best work when we don't know what we are doing."**

When you are pleased with what the poem says, and how it says it; when you are pleased with how the pieces form lines of type

A

N

D

YOU ALSO FIND THE SPACING

PLEASING

and

MEANINGFUL

only then **paste it all down! There it is! A poem from your pieces!**

You might just be surprised at how much sense you have made from nonsense — but don't strain for it. Just enjoy the process and remember that you are developing a skill and an awareness. Just as words have muscles and make different shapes of your mouth as you speak, **words have a shape on the paper and even the** space between the words can be meaningful.

You may, if you wish, type or write out the poem you have achieved from pasted parts, making limited adjustments of spacing and other changes to suit you. For example:

The pride of Fox
Challenges the Rabbit
to a celebration
of strength.
And song birds listen
to Nature's eyes
that highlight
the
sky.

Mona
Grove, Oklahoma

Making Something Out of Almost Nothing

Often, in writing, we discover what we want to say as we are writing and revising. One word seems to lead us to another. For example, I wonder if you can guess how this poem was written? (In the interest of space, I've only printed the beginning of the poem.)

My mother is cynical.
She acts as if she is running out of time.
She has a garden of anger . . .
Everyone is her victim.
Even in other people's houses
she is like a light, sometimes
bright, sometimes dim. It is as if
she's a contender for time.
She acts as if other people are paper
and she can wad us up and throw us away . . .

Pretty heavy stuff — what's the secret?

Or perhaps you can figure out the secret behind the creation of this piece?

I saw many shadows. They were standing by the stove. They were dressed all in dust. The orange sun was glowing on them. I heard a voice. It came from the corner. A message came flying by; a red flower flew in my house and I saw the sun burning in the night. A leaf fluttered and fell in my hand. It was gold. Then the wind blew it down the road.

As we said earlier, "sometimes we do our best work when we don't know what we are doing." It's also true that "sometimes you can make something out of almost nothing." So it was with the creation of these two poems:

The first, the "mother" poem, was written by a 7th grade male student in Lawton, Oklahoma. It was nearing the end of the semester and he had not finished one assignment in four months. He was known as a trouble-maker and "SLOW" for his age. SLOW????? with phrases like "impatient for escape" and "contender for time?"

The second poem was written by an 83-year-old women in Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

And, how about these:

Una sombra,
Ni payo y a ni una naranja
que lleva en su mano. La voz
lleva un mensaje.
La voz va y se oye
por el camino.

A shadow,
neither of a clown, nor an orange
that one carries in one's hand. The voice
carries a message.
The voice goes and is heard
along the road.

La Puerta del Sol
Salvation Army Senior Citizens Center
Oklahoma City

Keeping warm by the stove
I don't know about spring.
I want to paint these walls ebony.
Time means nothing to me.
It's a miracle, I suppose,
that I am alive.

Frederick Douglas
Jeltz Senior Center
Oklahoma City

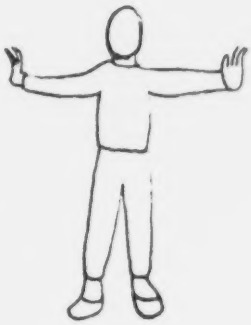
Each of the above writers used the same method to release and revise his/her work. **Here's how they did it:**

physical

Once again we're going to "warm up" our muscles so that we can use what's inside of our heads:

Begin this time by pulling back your hands to your shoulders — palms facing away from your body. Very slowly begin to press your palms against the air, **pressing further and further out each time so that your arms begin to stretch** out straight as you press and reach. Slowly, slowly **stretch and REACH as far as you can go . . . reach . . . REACH way into space** . . . push out the walls.

NOW, LET YOUR FINGERTIPS PLAY WITH THE AIR, FEEL WHATEVER IS OUT THERE. THEN, **GRAB WHATEVER YOU FIND OUT THERE** . . . AIR, SUNLIGHT, MAGIC. . . . **GRAB IT!** AND, QUICKLY, **BRING BOTH ARMS IN, CROSSING AND HUGGING TO YOUR CHEST WHAT YOU HAVE FOUND.** Repeat this reaching and stretching once or twice more and you are ready to write if you HOLD ON TO THAT "REACH."



writing

I am going to give you six practice words, 6 "magic" words. Write down these 6 words in a column at the right hand margin of your paper. Especially if you write large, you might want to turn your paper horizontally (the wide way facing your chest) to get an extended writing surface.

Here are your six words:

sea
house
field
voice
voracious
mountain

Remember: write the six in a column at the right hand edge of your paper. You may want to leave a few spaces between the words, but write them in this order and at the right-hand edge:

NOW ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS REACH FOR THOSE WORDS!

End-words are a beginning

STRETCH YOUR MIND AS YOU JUST STRETCHED YOUR ARMS. REACH WITH AT LEAST 8 or 9 SYLLABLES, OR SHORT WORDS, BEFORE YOU GET TO THE "GIVEN" WORD. When you get there that line may either have no punctuation, no periods or commas, and essentially *run-on* to the next line or it can be end-stopped with a period(.) or a semi-colon(;) or partially stopped with a comma(,) depending upon the sense and effect you want.

FOR EXAMPLE: if my end-word was "TIME " I could say:

"She acts as if she is running out of TIME." (with a period)
or
I might write:

"She acts as though the world whirls in time
to her dancing steps." . . . . . *story*

There is no punctuation, no period or comma, after "time" in the second example, and the phrase, "to her dancing steps" is on the second line followed by a period. That period, of course, causes a nice pause or stop, in the middle of the second line. **Now you are ready to go on reaching** to the next word, let's say it is **"story."**

"She acts as though the world whirls in time
to her dancing steps. Maura, the creator of *story,*
the princess who . . .?????

And I don't know what will happen from here until you or someone else gives me another word to reach for. GET IT?

Here again, are your words for practice: *sea, house, field, voice, voracious, mountain.*

Please use these words in the order in which they were given, though you may add an "s" or an "ed" if necessary. AND DO REACH FOR EACH WORD WITH AT LEAST 8 syllables or 8 short words.

You may end up with a poem or a paragraph, the beginning of a story, the beginning of a song. . . . if you want to go on with this game, **have someone else give you 6 other words.** The trick is for the "giver" to fight against making his or her own connections between the given words (don't have them fit together too neatly or easily). and do have, on the list, at least **one fairly unusual word** (like "voracious," even a word that you'll have to look up in a dictionary or discuss before you can use it).

After you have completed the exercise and your end word "piece" is on paper, it will be time to begin again! **This time** to **revise!** Make each word and each pause or stop, the rhythm of the language and the meaning of the language, as powerful as it can be!

FOR NOW . . .

REACH! PLAY! HAVE FUN!

The "given" words, remember, are always "magic." The body is "magic." Together they pull from the subconscious the other words and thoughts and memories we think we don't know and don't remember. Poems and stories emerge from the "game," and the "assignment," that begin with the rules but may improvise on the given theme, may find their own rules and their own rhythm . . . may find their own form. New connections allow a poetry of the whole person which begins with game and evolves into art and a personal and cultural marking.

Seed Painting

drawing

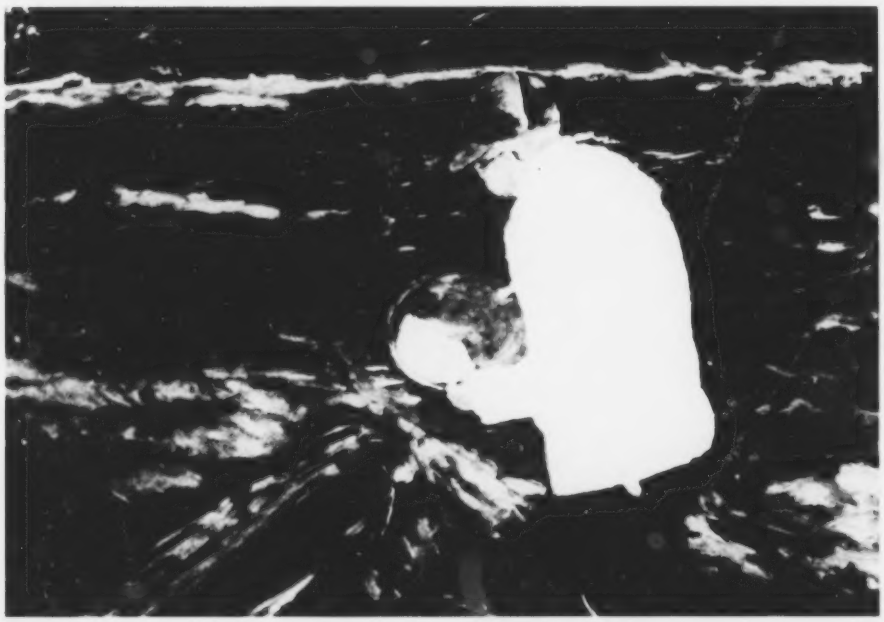
Now its time to **reach for** that "almost nothing," that "**small seed**" which might **begin a drawing or painting**.

Find a small section of a drawing or painting — in a magazine, or a catalogue, or your own work — that intrigues you because it has an unusual color, shape, or texture. Be sure that your chosen "section" comes from a photograph, or painting or drawing that you are willing to destroy or cut up.

Cut this section out, in any shape you please. This is your "seed."

Glue the "seed" down on a larger piece of paper or canvas.

Place it in an interesting location — not just the center.



Marie Rentfrow, Miami, Oklahoma, oil on canvas

Lois Thomas, Miami, Oklahoma,
acrylic

Look at it in its new space. **Allow the "seed" to determine how the painting, drawing, or collage grows.** Let your imagination and inner eye work freely.

Reach for associations:

The seed could lead you to a dream and intense colors in forms that tumble and fly and defy gravity. (Look at paintings by Marc Chagall for examples of this approach.)

The seed could be the center of a flower.

The seed could be a small scene of a narrative painting that tells a story.

The seed could be an eye of a bird.

The seed could be a staff of music.

The seed could be a bridge between the past and the future.

The Creative Leap

physical Lie on your back on a comfortable pad or carpet — but not your bed. We don't want to be too comfortable! Lift your arm and place an open palm facing you. Study your hand. **Trace the outline of one hand and the inner surfaces and lines of that hand with the index finger of your other hand,** touching each line, each depression, the calluses, the *smooth* and *crust* of nail and cuticle.

Slowly sit up.

drawing **Take a piece of paper — typing paper is fine — just about anything will do — tape it down loosely so it won't slip. Grab a pencil. Turn away from the paper** (this is called "blind contour" drawing) so you won't be tempted to peek at the paper. Focus your eyes on one line or edge or wrinkle of your hand. Then place the pencil point on the paper, and, **as though you were touching that focused point on your hand with the tip of the pencil, move your pencil on the paper as your eye slowly moves along the outside edges, to inside the palm, following the three main lines and all the tiny lines that you see in your subject hand.** Remember to really feel as if your pencil is touching the hand as the point moves on the paper and your eyes slowly scan your subject hand.

Develop the absolute conviction that you are touching the model as you draw.

Draw slowly — searchingly. Take your time.

When you are finished drawing and you peek at your work, you will notice that often the "blind-contour drawing" of the hand will be out of proportion. Your hand might look like a foot or a mountain or a forest. Accept the process! **There are no mistakes.**

Line Makes the Shape

There is no need to erase. You are learning to see and record, in minute detail, the tracks of where you have been in your life and where you are now.

Look at these examples:

Practice this technique of "blind contour drawing" often.

Try some of these variations:

Use materials other than pencils: pen and ink, a twig dipped in ink, charcoal, conte crayon, big fat kindergarten crayons, paintbrushes of different sizes with ink, different kinds of paper.

Make "blind contours" of other subjects (remember "contour" drawing requires drawing the line formed by the **outside** edges *and* the **inner** lines):

Look in a mirror and draw your face

Draw your cat

Draw the corner of your room

Draw trees, a typewriter, a bookshelf, houseplants, your medicine chest — **draw** anything and everything — **"blind" — by looking only at the subject and not your paper.**

And each time you draw, first trace all the shaping lines with your finger, just as you did when your hand was the subject. For example, sit beside another person, close your eyes and prepare to do a "blind contour" drawing by touching the other person's face, tracing his or her jaw bone, eye socket, nose line . . .

Look in a mirror. Draw your face, the outline and inner lines, without looking at the paper.

Now try this but only after you have done many drawings without looking at your paper.

This time you are allowed to **glance at your paper from time to time** to locate where you are or check a position or relationship. Still, 90 percent of your attention should be on the subject, whether it is a hand, a foot, a face — whether it is a landscape, a still life or a live model.

writing STUDY THE DRAWING OF YOUR HAND AND STUDY YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD AND BONE HAND. MAKE ANY CONNECTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS YOU CHOOSE TO MAKE. AT THE SAME TIME BEGIN TO **JOT DOWN YOUR DISCOVERIES — THIS TIME WITH WORDS** . . . WORDS THAT LEAP INTO LINES, STANZAS OR PARAGRAPHS.

Instead of just writing "about" your hand, you might want to "WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR HAND" or your hand-creature. You will, of course, want to use "metaphor" and compare what you see in your hand to something which might make your vision clear to the reader. Is your hand smooth or is it filled with lines? What are the lines like? Is there a pond in your palm? a jungle?

Good writing will come naturally if you follow your subject as fixedly as you did in your "blind-contour" drawing. Your hand will lead you!

Here are a few examples — the first written by Christel, a second grade student in Norman, Oklahoma:

DEAR HAND,
YOU LOOK LIKE A TRAPPED TIGER TRYING TO GET FREE.
YOU ARE AS SAD AS A LONESOME PORCUPINE.
YOU SCREAM IN THE NIGHT AND WAIT
FOR SOMEONE TO HELP
FREE YOU
SO YOU CAN COME HOME TO ME.

Not bad for a second grader!

Modified:
Blind Contour

Bessie McKinney, Blanchard, Oklahoma

Delora Bass, Blanchard, Oklahoma

And this from an older woman, Jennifer, age 8:

My hand.
My hand
looks
like
a
jungle.
My hand.
My hand.
looks like
Roots
of
a
tree.
My hand.
looks
like
rain
falling
from
the
sky.

Jennifer Alcox, age 8

In the last example, the placement of the words in one long column, one or two words to the line, and even the poet's choice of when to capitalize and when not to capitalize help to convey the subject — not just a hand, but a hand that is a tree, has roots, is "rain/falling/from/the/sky."

You can achieve that wonderful combination of form and subject if you **keep your eye on the subject,** keep returning to it for inspiration, and let your mind and imagination release and then fasten onto new places, new things, unusual combinations that work!

You may want to try this process with other subjects. Remember: Always **keep your eye on your subject; touch your subject; get it into your bones and blood** — even when that subject is not right in front of you — even when it is only in your mind and your memory . . . GET A HAND ON IT!

Imagine my hand
Imagine my hand at work
Imagine my hand holding the sun . . .

Mary Granger
Tulsa Center for the Physically Limited

mimosa, lily, chrysanthemum, daffodil, tulip, narcissus, rose, hummingbird, cockatiel, quail, parakeet, owl, nuthatch, toucan, dove, jay, finch . . .

Capture from your list three items: one bird, one flower, one tree — at least these. Do you like each equally? Does one item only absorb your senses and inform your mind? Touch it; smell it; listen to your tree or flower or bird. Feel its texture; taste it; listen to its message; commit it to memory.

On a withered branch
a crow settled . . .
Autumn nightfall.

—Basho, 1679

Though my shanks are thin
I go where flowers blossom,
Yoshino Mountain.

—Basho, 17th century

A fallen blossom
is coming back to the branch.
Look, a butterfly!

—Moritake 16th century

A butterfly sits
Then he flies high in the sky
Up, down and around.

—Ryan Shepherd
Second grade
1986, Broken Arrow,
Oklahoma

The tulip is in the pine tree
The parrot is in the tulip.

—Jessica, First grade
1986, Sand Springs,
Oklahoma

The last haiku, by a first-grader, though not adhering strictly to the haiku form (we will speak of that later), is a wonder of *Mitake*, of reseeing and capturing the *essence of the thing*.

Jessica really looked at the tulip and she saw in the shape of its petals the parrot's beak, the colors of the bright bird. Surely, here is the essence of flowering.

writing Here is all you have to do:
Enjoy the silence and the slow movement; see what is around you — now: list, capture "things" in nature and write a simple three lines — five syllables on the first line, seven on the second, five on the third — five/seven/five. If you

Haiku
5/7/5

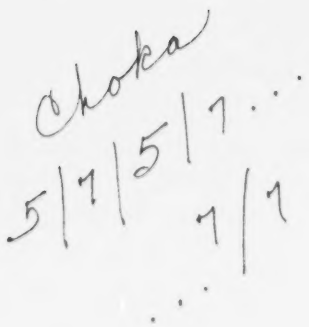
A syllable is a unit of sound. Children often clap to count syllables. Try it:
"bird" — one clap
"bird-like" — two claps
"beaut-i-ful" — three claps
"purple parrot sings" — five claps

prefer, use five short **words,** then seven, then five. Remember the sentence need not end because the line ends on its fifth or seventh syllable. The sentence can "run-on" to the next line. Keep your writing tight — no unnecessary words! You usually **do not need** or want **thes** or **ands** in a haiku, nor do you need many adjectives. **Haiku is poetry of the noun, the picture, the image.**

A Few Loosely Assumed Principles About Haiku

Haiku are simple, quiet, compressed — they **suggest** more than they state.

Haiku consist of 17 syllables, arranged in three lines, five/seven/five. (This form is an adaptation of the Japanese and is only approximate, so at times we may fudge a bit too, but not until we put up a good fight to stay within the guidelines of five/seven/five.)



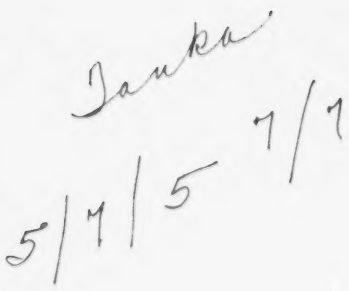
Punctuation can often accomplish what a word (or syllable) might; for example, a semicolon for "and," a dash for "and so on," an exclamation point for "aha!". . . . You can, therefore, sometimes avoid "using up" one of your syllables by using a punctuation mark instead.

Haiku usually contain at least some reference to nature, often seasonal. Yet haiku is not wholly about nature; it is rather **a "record of a moment of emotion in which human nature is linked to all nature."**

Because of the strict limitation of the frame, the poem is painted in as few brush strokes as possible. **Omit all unnecessary words; suggest more than you state.** Haiku is a poetry of the noun; many contain no verb, and sentences are usually unfinished. **A spark jumps the gap between two apparently different or unrelated ideas and makes the connection.**

Haiku presents the event as **happening now,** invites the reader to recreate the author's experience, to recapture a "spot of time."

Most people feel that rhyme tends to close the poem; haiku should be open . . . growing . . . inviting the reader to **reread** (but you may rhyme if you wish).



Once you have written one haiku (remember the five/seven/five is only a guide, not an absolute, but **do insist on compression,** on **as few words as possible),** you may wish to move on to other forms of Japanese traditional poetry. The **choka** or **long poem** alternates **five/seven/five/seven** . . . and can extend to more than 100 alternations until its **closing seven/seven.** The **tanka,** an even older form of **31 syllables,** often is written by **two people in collaboration;** the **first writes five/seven/five,** the

Capturing the Essential

Haiku, a form of Japanese poetry, is out to capture the essential, the **whatness** of a thing, the primary quality that expresses its uniqueness. **Haiku** is, therefore, **a way of seeing** as well as a way of saying and writing. Like the Japanese tea ceremony which is called "the way of tea," in this new **way of seeing** or *Mitake* (reseeing or revision), **ordinary things are put in a fresh light.**

In order to see anew and to capture the essence of a moment, try the following procedure:

physical

Moving with Nature

If at all possible, obtain a recording of koto music and play it on your phonograph. *The koto, perhaps one of the oldest musical instruments in the world, came to Japan from China in the eighth century. The instrument averages about six feet in length and 10 inches in width, and has 13 strings of equal thickness. Tunings are changed by shifting one or several of the 13 small bridges, and the strings are struck with three ivory picks attached to the thumb, forefinger and middle finger of the player's right hand.* From this description, you might be able to imagine how pleasureable it would be if you could find a koto player and invite him to play for a small group of friends. But very slow,

simple, single-instrument music may be substituted; for example, a guitar or a banjo — played slowly.

As the koto or other stringed instrument music is being played, it would be ideal to **move very slowly** — in an exaggeratedly slow style — to the distinctive vibrations of the koto.

First, practice by just standing with your feet placed comfortably apart, at about shoulder width, **toes pointed straight ahead (not** like a ballet dancer). Everything should be comfortable and stable and **at one with the ground** under your feet. Slowly round your shoulders; **let your arms fall to your sides,** hands relaxed, palms facing what is behind you.

Now, very, very **slowly let your arms drift up . . . drift . . . slowly, as if they were being pressed softly upwards by a warm press of air.** When your arms reach shoulder height, **turn your palms** forward, **your fingertips pointing to the** sky. And now, very, very **slowly,** again . . . let the invisible string attached from your shoulders to your fingertips **pull your hands back toward your shoulders** as your arms bend in to your body at the elbow.

Do not fuss with the movement; any movement of the arms that is very, very slow will be fine. Make a circle with one arm; let the other arm follow; . . . circle, slowly, the entire world. . . . Or while your hands are at shoulder height, **slowly press down with your hands,** pressing the soft, warm air to the ground.

Let your knees bend slightly (always keep a soft flexed knee, not a deep knee bend); lift one foot and place it heel down; put it back in place; lift the other foot; heel down. Improvise to the slow, magical plunks and plinks of the koto.

Move slowly — very slowly — back to your seat. You are beginning to get the **movement and the texture of simplicity and silence;** you are entering into the moment. Now you are **ready to see anew.**

But before you write in a new way, perhaps you might like to **go for a walk — outside.** Haiku is not just about the **essence of seeing** and of **saying,** it is also the essence of **place** — of nature.

The Japanese have a tradition, a picnic during which they go out into the woods, the park, a backyard — find a spot, write haiku on strips of rice paper and then hang them from a tree! From nature — back to nature!

Take a pad and pencil on your walk — your "doodle diary" will be splendid — and as you walk, stop now and then to write down what you see. **List what you see. Be specific. Name things.** (If you do not know the name of a particular weed, flower, or tree, jot down a description and search out the name later.) **Good writing is filled with details** and **with the names of things:** *weeping willow, redwood, hawthorn, palm, cypress, fir, spruce,*

second tries to relate to those first three lines and **adds two lines** of his own, **seven/seven.**

Remember that whether you are writing haiku, choka or tanka the idea is to "resee," to experience the "way of haiku," the way of revision, and to capture in a tight, brief form the essence of your subject — always suggest more than you state.

This student decided to create her own form, a *haiku sequence,* a series of five/seven/five which relate to each other. Note, however, that if you count the syllables, there is not a strict adherence to the form; sometimes a line that should be seven syllables is five, etc.... **She has bent the form to suit the demands of her subject.** That is the way good poets always operate — **the form is your guide,** the **form is there for you to fight against,** the form keeps you "honest." But in the example which follows, the **essence of the form and the subject** are **rendered** by **keeping it tight — looking at the subject — capturing it.**

Oh, pearly white sea gulls
flying gracefully across
the sapphire sea.

Oh, rainbows upon
the pearly white clouds
where unicorns fly.

Oh, apple tree of
emeralds and rubies sparkling
upon the blue sea.

Little girl with pearl
eyes as shiny as the sea
looks for unicorns

—Michelle Huber
Fourth grade
Reynolds Elementary
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Becoming the Form

drawing

The Japanese have a form of drawing called **haiga** that is the nonverbal equivalent of haiku. One brush stroke in a *haiga* drawing captures the essence of a thing:

Using oil, pastel, chalk, charcoal or a fat soft brush that comes to a point when wet and black ink and several large sheets of newsprint (18" x 24"), begin by holding your chalk or brush in an

unusual way — grasp it with all your fingers or use your other hand, etc. Use the side of the chalk.

Repeat the physical exercise, including the use of slow music suggested in the haiku section. Before you even pick up a drawing instrument, **imagine** yourself doing the action expressed in the word list which follows. Allow your response to come through your hand.

Using your **whole body and arm, make a mark in the air** that expresses each of these words: leap/stumble and fall/soar/struggle/stretch/dance/ hit/lift a heavy object/skip/explode.

Now, mark on the paper your expressive response, the shape that results from the full arm movements, now holding pencil or brush. Do not bother with surface detail. **These marks should be done fairly quickly and should be filled with your own spirit and energy.**

Now that you are used to responding with shapes and not worrying about detail, try this: **Select a subject:** a tree, a person, a chair. As with contour drawing, your eyes should be on the subject 90 percent of the time. But **this time, allow your hand, arm and total being to respond to the form. Don't worry about detail.** You should not only try to **capture the essential form,** you should **become that form** and let the drawing be an extension of that becoming.

If you find it difficult to relax and move freely, try once again, using music as background for this drawing technique.

A few more suggestions:

Have someone **model** for you, changing his or her pose every five seconds, ten seconds, every minute up to holding a five-minute pose. **Capture the shifts of pose and the stationary holds in your moving pen or brush.**

Do *haiga*-like drawings of landscapes and cityscapes.

If you are painting, try doing a *haiga* painting of your subject to get a fresh approach.

Finally, **try combining** a *haiga*-like painting or drawing, stressing the **essence** of your subject, **with** the approach you practiced in modified blind-contour drawing, stressing **detail.**

And what if your origins are German, Czech, African, Hispanic, or American Indian? Could you start with dance or ritual movement and end with writing and drawing? Is there a poetic form indigenous to your culture? Try it!

Rounding Things Out

We are told that we are flesh and blood, bones and muscle. Human beings, it is said, stand freely in space with feet planted firmly on the ground, or sit securely in a particular room, or on a porch, or in the garden. We are, are we not, three-dimensional? We can be observed from all angles; we are composed of rounded shapes (some, of course, more than others).

Yet we often fail to experience ourselves as full-bodied. We feel, at times, flat, two-dimensional; we even feel, at times, *invisible*. So there are, in visual art and writing, possibilities for the expressions of two-dimensionality — figures that have height and width but no volume, and there are abstractions — lines and shapes to merely represent figures. And in writing, there are styles which suggest (as we saw in Chapter Two) the streaming of a bodiless mind afloat in space. But if we wish to suggest in drawing and writing that our subject is "real," that it exists as a living body in space, then we must get that roundedness, that full-bodied feeling into our own bodies:

physical

Becoming Three-Dimensional

Stand with your feet placed firmly on the ground, and placed about shoulder width apart, feet pointed straight ahead. Or, if you prefer, sit, but experience yourself as sitting firmly in your chair, pressing your buttocks into the seat and your lower back into the back of the chair. Whatever your starting position, **experience yourself as planted firmly into your space.**

Breathe deeply and slowly for a moment or two, enjoying the feeling of support you are getting from the ground or chair.

Slowly let your head fall forward and circle a quarter turn to your left shoulder, then passing back through center make a half-circle with your head to your right shoulder. Gently repeat these half-circles, passing from left to right to left . . . 4 or 5 times.

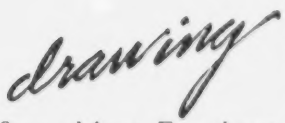
Now slowly lift your shoulders up to your ears and very, very slowly circle your shoulders, in nice full circles — up, back, down, around to the front and up, back, down, around to the front. . . . Do at least four very slow shoulder circles.

Now breathe in as your stomach rounds out and press your stomach flat as you exhale, breathing slowly and rounding and flattening your stomach each time.

Finally, circle one leg, or both legs; circle your ankles (taking your feet with you, of course); circle your arms, your wrists and hands.

Return to a resting position and just experience yourself again as firmly planted in your place — as fully rounded — as being right here!

Line & Color to Create Texture & Shading

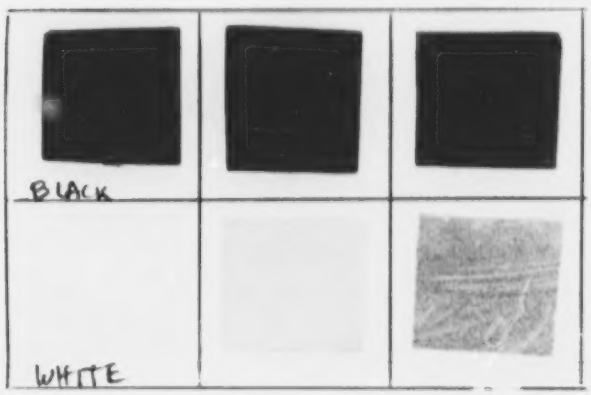


When visual artists set out to "round things out," they take into consideration what they call the "value" or "local value" of an object. For them "value" equals the degree of light or dark which an object contains. You can best determine the "value" of an object by squinting your eyes as you look at it. When you look at an object through squinted eyes, details blur and you can better recognize the duration of the tone, or the degree of light and dark — the "value" it contains.

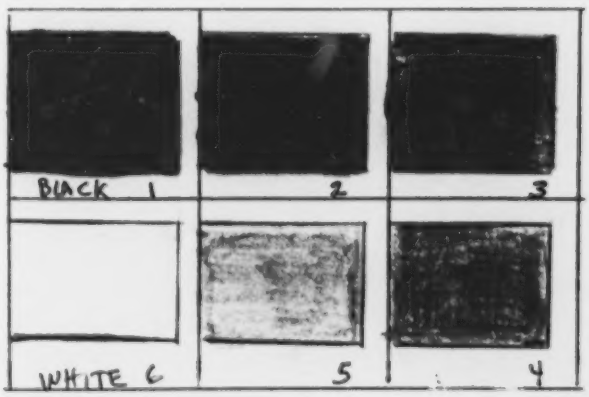
Different kinds of pencils (soft to hard) produce a different "local value." Pen and ink or brush with water will produce a wide variety of values as well. The amount of pressure you exert will change the lightness or darkness and therefore the "value" of a mark. Erasers may be used to change the value of something by removing or lightening areas.

Make a value scale:

You will need pencils; black and white paints such as acrylic; tempera or watercolor, and white drawing paper. **See the example** of a value study in pencil and in paint.



PAINTED VALUE SCALE
(Black and White)



PENCIL VALUE SCALE
You control the value with pencil by how much PRESSURE you use!

Make your own value scale, making your squares about 1" x 1" in any arrangement you like. Try to keep the value inside each square consistent, with no variation in lightness or darkness. Put an even tone in any one square. Save this scale for other exercises in this book.

Make four photocopies of one of your contour line drawings.

Now, use pencils, charcoal, or pen and ink — whichever you like best — and your value scale. **Make a value study** using at least six degrees of shade from white to black on each copy of your drawing, changing where you put the lights and darks in each one. Look at the example included; notice that sometimes the background is treated with dark, sometimes with light. EXPERIMENT!

These value "studies" are usually done quickly and on a small scale and are then called **thumbnail sketches.** Before beginning any drawing or painting you should try at least 10 or 12 thumbnail sketches, arranging your subject differently in each. Emphasize different aspects of your subject through changes in value, placement or location within the frame or format, through color, texture, detail or the lack of it.

Try some of these ideas. . . .

Take any drawing you have made, make several photocopies, treat each one in a different way (just like the little thumbnails — only these can become finished drawings!).

Draw into some with color

Cut some up and rearrange the parts with some collage materials

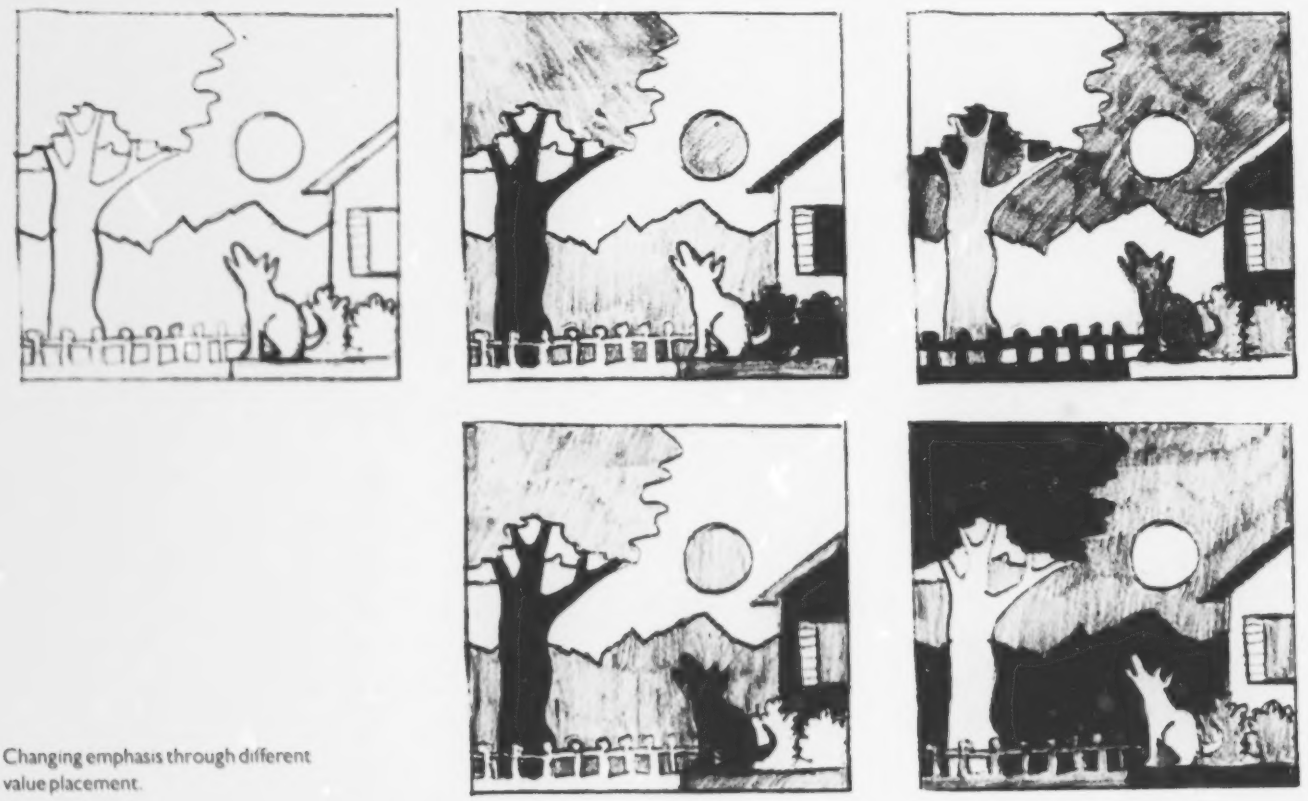
Use a drawing you have made as the resource for a painting by making copies and trying different and unusual color studies (see below)

Copy a master drawing or painting and change it

Put several copies together to make a much larger picture than the individual copies

Keep changing your emphasis!

As an artist, **you will have to decide what is most important in your picture,** what you want the viewer to focus on. **Emphasize this** through some special treatment such as position, color, value, texture, while allowing other shapes or forms to be less important.



Changing emphasis through different value placement.

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Color & Value: "Local" Color

Set up a still life with four or five simple objects with an obvious color: arrangements of vegetables, fruits, packaged goods, etc.

Do **a painting using only black-white** with at least four or five shades of gray plus pure black and pure white.

Now do a painting using strong pure colors: red, yellow, blue, purple, orange, green. Note the "value," the intensity, the lightness and darkness of each color.

Next, shine a strong light on the still life to create shadows. Sense the temperature of the shadows, cool or warm. Study shapes carefully. **Notice the colors in shadows:** blues, browns, colored grays. (Colored grays are complementary colors plus white: red plus green plus white; blue plus orange plus white; yellow plus purple plus white.)

Create the **shadows** from mixing dark colors that feel cool (those with more greens and blues), and those that are warm (those that have more reds and browns). **Do not use black for shadow effects, use a darker color.**

Create the **highlighted** forms by mixing white with color.

The shadows and the highlighted areas together create the illusion of roundness and depth.

Mary Phelps, Miami, Oklahoma, detail from Tempera painting

In Nature

Study a small patch of something — grass, a flower, tree bark, water, etc. and list the number of colors and color combinations you can see. What kind of mood or feeling is generated? Where have you seen these colors before? How does time of day influence it? Visit this place or patch during different times of the day. Record the differences you see and feel.

Paint Chip Hunt

Obtain several dozen paint chips from your local paint store.

Match, as exactly as you can, each paint chip with an object in your environment (such as clothing, plants, furniture, building materials, supermarket products or advertisements).

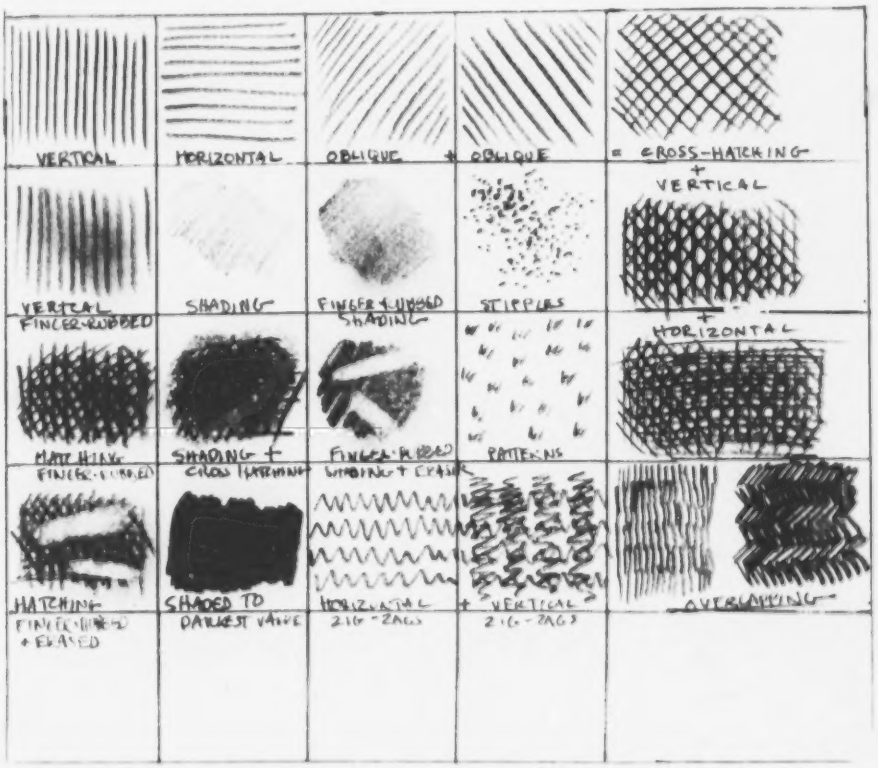
Using paint, try to create some colors that are similar to the chips. (You won't be able to get an exact match because the original materials of the paper and on the paint chips affect the color).

Be aware of how you must talk to yourself to match the chips: "This red is slightly more orange than that one. This blue is lighter than any of those," etc.

Making Things Look Round: Cross Hatching

Hatching: A series of marks sometimes vertical, sometimes horizontal, is also used to produce values and textures. Select pencils of different hardness and softness; ink and pen; ink, brush and water; paper and erasers.

Look at the examples shown here; try making them all, first with pencils of different softness or hardness, then with ink and pen, then ink and brush.



Notice how a variety of hatching techniques can be used in the same picture to round and shade, add depth or highlight.

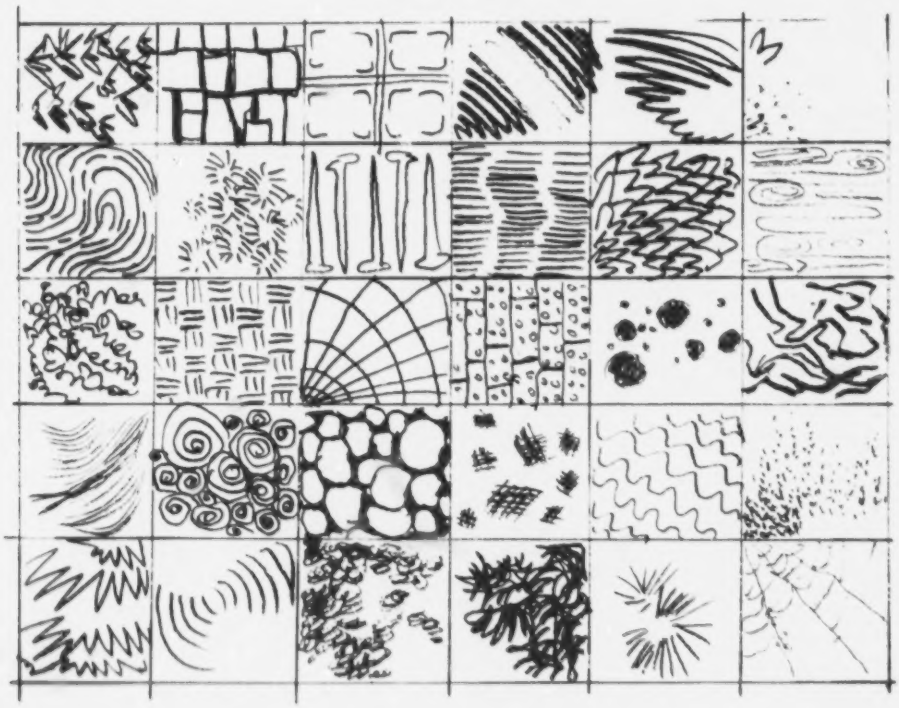
Texture and Patterns

Adding rich surface details to your drawings and paintings creates areas of delicious visual interest. **Rubbings** are a good way to understand and recognize pattern and texture in drawing.

Start with an ordinary pencil and typing paper. To make rubbings, use the side of your pencil, lay a piece of paper on a surface and rub back and forth until the texture shows up.

Do rubbings of coins, tree bark, feathers, bricks, combs, sidewalk cracks, weeds, flowers, leaves, paneling on your walls, brass plaques, fork prongs, fences, twigs, lace, bric-a-brac, etc.

Let the rubbings be your teachers: Try to duplicate the unique lines and patterns you discover with other tools like pen and ink or brush and ink. Study some of the examples included here for other texture and pattern ideas.



Notice how some of these drawings begin to resemble things such as stones, wood, bushes, etc. Try making similar ones in your doodle book. Invent more of your own.

Make a photocopy of a contour drawing of yours and use one of the texture rubbing marks, hatching or stippling to create value and surface texture.

Do a color painting and texture collage of a picture you have been saving to work on. Collect patterned paper such as wallpaper samples or wrapping paper, plus your rubbings, and cut into various shapes and sizes. Arrange these on another surface with solid areas of color made of more cut or torn paper, or painted.

Rounding Things Out: Words, Sounds, Rhythm — Shading Devices of Language

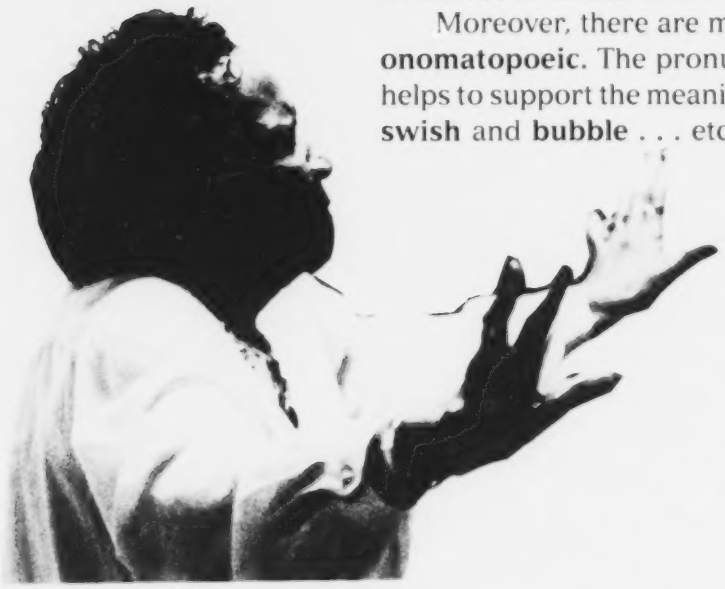
writing **Words** too have the ability to **convey shades of meaning,** subtle suggestions, degrees of intensity: There is a vast difference — not in kind but in degree — between saying "That boy is **plump**" and saying "That boy is **fat.**" Or how about substituting: **obese** or **enormous** or **corpulent, stout, portly, pudgy, rotund, chubby?** Each of these adjectives (descriptive words) means having an abundance of flesh, often to excess, but "stout" and "portly" are more polite or formal terms; "pudgy" describes someone who is thickset and dumpy; "plump" suggests a pleasing fullness; **obese is huge!** (Why, the word even has a fat "O" in it and when you say it out loud your mouth forms a big "O"!)

Because of the possibilities our language offers us, we are careful just which adjective we use to suggest the degree, the shading we want.

So too with verbs (action words): **there is a difference between dig** and **delve,** between **look** and **peer.** And adverbs too help convey shades of meaning: We may sip our tea **slowly** or **lingeringly** or **carelessly** or **thoughtlessly,** etc.

Sound patterns and the **length of a line** or sentence create rhythms and textures which **also suggest degrees** of emotion or intensity, as we noted earlier. There is a difference between walking on *tiptoe* and **treading,** and that difference lies not only in the meaning but in the sounds. How we linger on the sound of the **d** in trea**d** and tro**d helps to suggest a heavy step,** in contrast to **tiptoe,** the **p** and repeated **t** sounds being as light on the tongue as the toe is on the floor.

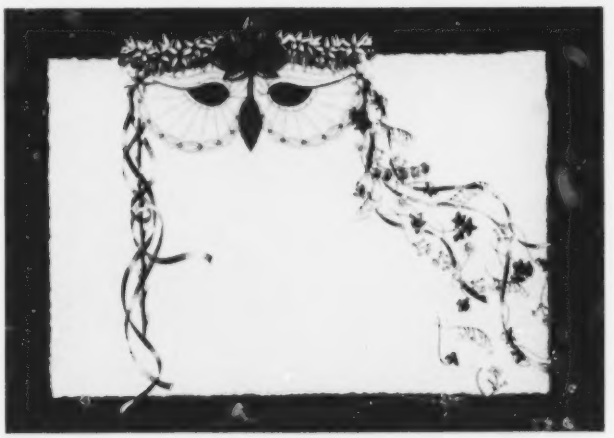
Moreover, there are many words in English which are called **onomatopoeic.** The pronunciation of these words, their sounds, helps to support the meaning. For example: **plunk** and **trickle** and **swish** and **bubble** . . . etc. **Using onomatopoeic** words in your writing energizes the page, helps engage the body of the reader in what is being said. **Sound and rhythm are shading devices of language.**



Another device for adding **degrees of light and dark** and shade, for shaping your subject in writing, is adding **dialogue. Even one line showing how a person speaks, if it is a characteristic line, can capture a life for the page and for posterity.**

writing And still another way of "rounding things out" in writing includes the shading devices of carefully selected words, sounds, and rhythm but insists first of all on the involvement of the whole body in a game of masks, make-up and mime or acting.

Judy Baker, Tulsa, Oklahoma



Speaking Through the Mask

No matter how complex, each life is minimal. Fine written material, literature, the writing of it, the reading of it, gives us **the opportunity to expand and to develop. SO TOO WITH MASKS.**

We usually think of putting on a mask at halloween, or for a festival like Mardi Gras. We put on a witch mask, or a monster mask, or a clown mask — and disguise ourselves — Hide behind the distorted features and suggestive colors, but **a mask is not always a hiding place.**

A MASK CAN BE A MEANS OF EXPRESSION . . .
. . . not a hiding but a showing forth.

We can put on a **MASK TO SPEAK THROUGH, a mask that lets the opposite or the hidden in each of us spring into being!**

physical

First study your face in the mirror. Discover the face within your face, the face behind the face you show to the world.

Experiment! Gently pull your skin here, stretch your mouth, there.

You can create a mask for your face with paper but **I prefer make-up!**

Painting Your Face

First prepare your face with a thick layer of cleansing cream and then wipe off the excess cream.

HAVE HANDY A VARIETY OF MAKE-UP. Keep it simple, but be sure to have a black or brown mascara pencil for lines of age, worry, or character. use the pencil in short strokes for "5 o'clock shadow," or line and then gently smudge in the lines on your face which would deepen naturally with age.

Use blush, especially shades of pink, on cheeks, the very tips of your ears, and even a dot at the inner edge of the eye and at the end of the chin to add youthfulness to the face.

YOU MIGHT ALSO WANT TO HAVE CLOWN WHITE TO SMEAR ON YOUR FACE, OR FOR TOUCHING UP YOUR HAIR TO SUGGEST A GREATER DEGREE OF GRAYING.

A FEW SHADES OF LIPSTICK AND EYE SHADOW . . .

PERHAPS EVEN SOME ARTIFICIAL HAIR PIECES AND GLUE FOR BEARDS, MUSTACHES. Or . . .

SMEAR BLACK UNDER YOUR EYES AND SEE WHO EMERGES, add a wig . . . add a braid . . . or stretch a white tight fitting rubber swimming cap over your hair to suggest baldness.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT. KEEP CLEANSING CREAM AND TISSUE HANDY!

AND HATS — A DIFFERENT HAT — can change a face.

TUCK YOUR HAIR UNDER A YELLOW HARD-HAT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS. TRY A BONNET? Scarves?

The minute I put on a different hat, it changes my body and voice as well. I walk differently. I stand differently. I speak differently, in different rhythms; I choose different diction: different adjectives, verbs, nouns. **Key phrases,** appropriate to that hatted person (but not perhaps to the me I know every day) **come to me.** There's a tough part of me, a part that might say "I'm not kiddin' yu'" or "Fix that darn contraption! Just fix it!" and there's a part of me that meekly says "Excuse me." The hat, the mask of paper or paint allows me to extend myself . . . to show forth in all the many strengths and weaknesses, all the many voices, all the many people you and I contain.

Of course, to wear your new hat with conviction, **you have to be the kind of person who listens to other people, who hears other people,** who notes, observes, researches the infinite variety of ways individuals reveal themselves.

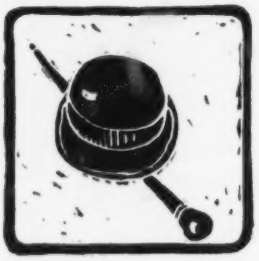
writing Now to the Writing.

Study your new face in the mirror.

Using a large piece of paper, **fill the paper, writing any which way, with phrases, or words that this person would say in his or her characteristic way.**

Don't worry about order or sequence, at first. Let the concerns and the energy of your new personality emerge in languid or fast rhythms . . . in sharp or soft words. **Notice how the length of a sentence, the length of a line on paper, creates a pattern, a rhythm.**

In poetry and all good writing, the combination of the length of a phrase and the sounds of the words in that phrase, in addition to denotative meaning, **create the basic rhythm of the speaker, the breath note and pace of his or her life:**



"Well, I'm not kiddin' you"

Now, **choose one phrase, sentence or word** that seems to be the most representative of your new person. **put it at the top of another piece of paper.**

Here is your beginning, (though in revision it may become middle or end) and now that you have made that selection, **everything else in your writing will emerge from that phrase** and then the next and the next — one thing calling forth the other, following the lead of the masked speaker and of what you put down.

You might start with: "Well, I'm not kiddin' you" or "Do you have my chair?" then one line will demand the next, so that "Well, I'm not kiddin' you," might lead to . . . "he worked most of two hours, and he still couldn't stick a knife in that coonz skin . . ." etc. Letting it emerge, then going back and shaping and pruning until a person walks off the page . . . in four lines or ten or twenty. But only if you **speak through** the mask . . . and **NOT about** the mask, only if you remember the lesson of the haiku . . . to **choose carefully, suggest more than you state, paint a picture with words, and with the music of your subject.**

Then you will use the vehicle of the mask the way Edgar Lee Masters did in "Spoon River Anthology," the way T. S. Eliot did in the "Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock,"or the way William Faulkner did in "As I Lay Dying" — each letting the many voices within him speak.

This mask exercise may, like some of the others I've suggested, seem extreme. But it works. **Soon you will be able to recreate another person without paint, by merely putting on a mask in the theater of your mind.**

FOR NOW, PAINT YOUR FACE AND WRITE!

Here is an example of writing through a mask, as if you were another person (often called "persona" writing). In this case, the author, a thin woman from New York City, speaks through the mask of a large, muscular man from the Arkansas hills:

Wild Kingdom

Well, I'm not kiddin' you,
he worked most of two hours,
and he still couldn't stick a knife
in that coonz skin . . .
couldn't skin 'em even oncet he caught
him dead.
They're tough I tell you!
Only one thing I ever seen as tough —
a damn old anteater.
I tell yu he
got one claw sticks out of his foot like this . . .
sharp as a razor blade.

But them badgers
I tell yu
they're tough
and mean. Only one thing
I seen as mean:
just track you to your camp,
them wolverines.
Them old boys'll
ruin everything;
and you can't touch 'em;
grow as big sometimes as a good-size dog.
But a dog don't stand a chance against 'em —

Rip that dog's guts out just like that!
It's them dad-gum front feet.

Yu watch 'em
Yu watch 'em good
how they pitch and claw.

Makes yu wanta wrestle with a snake.

It is interesting to note that though the author is a small woman, she has within her the desire and the strength to wrestle with anything — even the unknown. Through the mask, she speaks convincingly and lets a formerly hidden part of her personality emerge.

Here are several other examples of wearing a new hat, looking into a mirror and writing in the voice or voices of the person you see there.

Double Take

Why am I different?
I'm a Gemini, you know — double- take!
Sometimes I'm young as a new-budded rose,
Sometimes, old as the mountains.
I can be a flirt, a siren,
but the part of me that's a little agey
keeps the young me in tow.
Gemini, my guiding star,
gives me variety, adapts me to change.
Old, or young . . .
I can be anything!

Iva Simpson
Miami, Oklahoma
Senior Citizens Center

I Am Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

I am Eleanor Roosevelt
I was the President's wife.
They thought I bossed him
and used his money.
I'd go to the bank.
They thought he liked the theatre;
I loved the theatre.
We went to the theatre all the time,
me and the President.
I enjoyed it, being bewitched.
The President didn't like it
so well, but I did.
You know, I grew up as a poor child,
But when I married him — Oh, boy!
I thought I was somebody.
Lots of people in the world
thought I tried to run his business.
I tried to see him as he was:
and he was handicapped.
They thought I tried to go out,
and I did, I went
all over the country
giving lectures on what we liked to do.
I said we like to go to the theatre.
They said I looked like a witch.
I probably did, but I loved
to go to the bank and spend
money on the house.
I wanted the house just so-so.
I tried to tell the butlers
how to arrange my house.
I wanted my warm coffee in my room.
I wanted my own privacy.
As for his life, he could have done
what he wanted to and run
the children's lives. We had four children.
They thought I tried to run their lives, too.
Oh, I was in this and I was in
that and I was in organizations
and I went to Europe.
I even went to England and tried to tell
Churchill how to run the world.
After my my husband died,
Well, I was just sad.
I sort of drifted out of the world. Oh, but
I still wanted to climb. I still wanted to climb.
I tried to get in organizations,
but I wasn't well now.
I wasn't well now.
I should've died or retired
because I did my duty for my country
or I thought I did.
I guess I must have spent too much at the bank;
I spent too much money.
Maybe I went to the theatre;
maybe I was a witch.
I don't know.
I lived.

Mary Granger
Tulsa Center for Physically Limited

Encounter

"Pardon me," I said to the woman,
"You do not know me,
but you remind me of someone
I knew long ago:
A lover of happy endings,
She thought the world was a wonderful garden,
where weeds dare not enter
and roses grew no thorns;
that love kept the earth on its axis
and war was an old wives' tale:
that death was a bad dream,
to be followed by a glad awakening."
"I knew her, too,"
the woman in the mirror said;
and as she turned away,
a tear crept down her cheek.

Goldie Capers Smith
Tulsa, Oklahoma

drawing Use a mirror again and try the mask exercise with drawing or painting. You might even want to start with a **drawing of your new self using pastels,** or using some of the very make-up you used on your face. Select colors this new person would like, or use textures that convey some quality of the person . . . smooth and light; hard-edged and sharp, etc.

Eggs are People Too!

drawing You will need a soft pencil, paper and a lamp. A small reading lamp is good but any kind will do. Got one? Good! . . . Now!

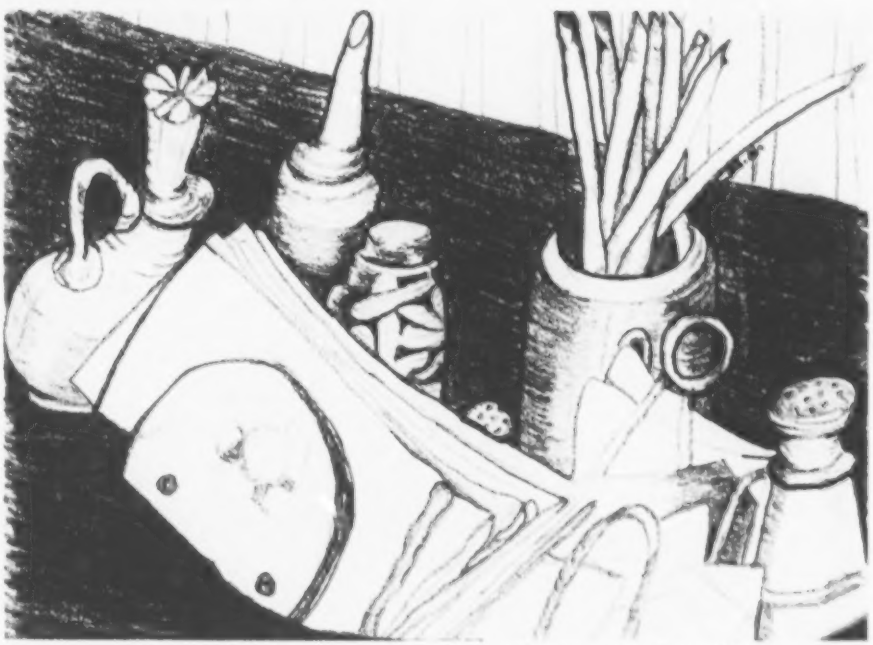
Go to the refrigerator and get a couple of eggs. Place them on a flat surface with a plain cloth or paper.

Position your lamp or other light source near the eggs to cast a strong shadow:

Draw a frame on your paper of any size you like: make it unusual — a circle, a triangle, a size you have not used before.

Using a pencil, try to capture the egg's form through the shapes of the light and the shapes of the shadows. Look for the values you made in your earlier value scale: light shades, medium shades of grays and dark shades. Note how these shades and **shadows** exist **as shapes.**

Repeat this exercise with charcoal or pen and ink. Try it with round fruit instead of eggs, with apples, oranges, pears, etc. Try other subjects like clouds or water or items normally found on your kitchen table.



Flo Kleinstieber, Pryor, Oklahoma, pencil

Try this exercise using your own head or face as the subject. It is shaped like an egg, in a general way. Use the strong light to help you see the darks and lights as shapes rather than lines or smudges. **Try painting** the image of your face **with one color mixed with**

black and/or white to create all the values — all the degrees of light and dark you see in your face as you look in a mirror. This is called a monochromatic treatment.

To help you practice looking for "value" shapes here is another exercise.

Shadows Are Also Shapes

You will need charcoal, black ink and a bamboo brush — or other soft brush that is full, yet comes to a point when wet — and white drawing paper.

Look at the example drawing included here; the shadow on the face is shaped the way it is because of the shape of the nose-cheek-face. Shadows follow the shape of the object they are on or come from.

Turn the example upside down; draw a frame on your paper to match the size of this example.

Use your charcoal to make the shadow shapes of this example. Next use the ink and brush to make those same shapes.

Find some photos in black and white with strong shadows. Repeat the above exercise.

Beginning to get the feel of this? **Continue with a live subject.** Find a partner or friend, and shine a light near the face to **create strong shadow.**

Shadows as Shapes

Using a bamboo brush and ink, leave the lighted area as the white of the paper.

Paint in black ink only the shapes of the shadows — you will use only two values, black and white — no middle tones.

Begin anywhere on the shadow side, **look at the shadow until you can see it as a shape** — then paint it with the brush.

Continue in this way until you have all the shadows, including the smaller ones on the light side.

When you are finished, you may want to paint the shapes in the background of your model.

Always note the relationship of one shape to another by position, and size in relationship to the frame or border of your paper. **Look for exact shapes of shadows, not what you think they might or should look like.** Take your time.

Still-life Value Exercise

Select a still life photo from a magazine or book to use as a model.

You will need a piece of charcoal, kneaded eraser, or soap eraser and heavy drawing or charcoal paper.

Cover a piece of paper with a middle value or tone, using your charcoal on its side. Rub it with your hand or cloth to make it even (like putting on makeup).

Use a kneaded or soap eraser. **Begin to erase areas** that show (on your selected photo) middle to light or white values. Do not draw outlines with your eraser. Instead, **wipe out broad large shapes or areas.**

When you are finished, add the darkest tones with more charcoal in a free and loose fashion. You should have three tones, dark, medium and light. Continue to refine your image by seeing and creating more variety in tones until you have the six you had earlier in your first value study.

When you have developed the six values or tones — stop — step back and allow the drawing to tell you what else it needs. Pay no attention to the setup you were following. The drawing may ask for a contour line here and there, a texture, harder or softer edges, a little more dark here or light there. Don't worry about what others might think or say: **THIS IS YOUR EXPERIENCE!**

Carrie Coffee, Miami, Oklahoma

How About This . . .

Use charcoal or dark chalk and work as fast as you can. Make 100 to 300 short marks (counting out loud) that reflect the landscape or still life or other subject you are looking at. Keep your eyes on the subject the whole time. When finished, look at the form as if it were clay to be carved into — carve or sculpt it through erasing at least 75 percent, then redraw or shade it in a new way, and add some color in places. Let it become whatever it wishes.

Try this with painting by using short brush marks instead of charcoal; wipe out large parts, with cloth or paper towels, leaving faint color or even bare canvas in some places — sit back and look at what is left. What does it suggest to you? What does it resemble? Got an idea? GOOD! Now go back in and develop the new idea in rich detail. You may want to use some collage materials too and glue items onto your carved-out-multiple-marks.

More on Rounding Things Out

Entering the past moment of the present . . .

Writing & Drawing In History

We all have relics of our past. For some it 's merely the white bowl shaped like a toilet seat that Aunt Betty gave us and we dared not remove from its place of honor on the dining room table.

The fortunate, however, have diaries, photographs, notes, family trees, memories. Some have even stumbled across packets of old letters and journals in the attic. The industrious and inquisitive have followed a family lead or an obsession with a particular period of history all the way to the library or the historical society.

How do we use the history in our bones, and the history we discover by chance, and the history we research to write a poem, a play, a story and to draw or paint a scene or portrait?

How do we **preserve the freedom of fiction and invention while remaining faithful to facts and alive to another time and place?**

The answer is to **write, draw,** and **paint inside the skin of your focal character, time, and place,** residing comfortably in the flesh and bones of history.

physical **Set aside a room or special space in your home or office, that will become the past moment of your present.** Add to it objects of the period. It's amazing what you can find in the flea market and even a thimble, if it is the right thimble, can help immeasureably. Of course, this will take research, searching, and gathering but books with pictures of period rooms and artifacts of your own past or another's are easy to find in your local library.

When you write, live in the historic space which you have created.

Put on the clothes of the period you are re-CREATING. A tight girdle, or high buttoned collar can pinch a face and help form a precise, clipped pattern of diction; a pair of heavy boots will help to give weight to your words and Anglo-Saxon directness to your diction. And hats . . . don't forget hats. . . .

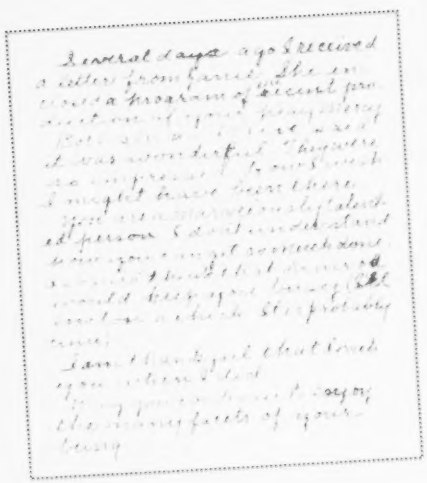
Sit in character and time.

Walk around the room in character.

Forget the computer and **use a quill pen or a stick in the sand** when it is appropriate.

Learn the names of things of the period and what they were used for. Make a pot of bergamot tea and sip it; or try bear meat or quail.

This is not an acting exercise, but a writing and drawing exercise. Yet the methods are similar, because the objective is the same.



We want the historical period and the characters from that period to enter our bloodstream and come out as ink shaped into letters and words. We have to read about the period — that's essential — but we must also get it into our body.

And don't forget letters. We learn more from original correspondence, learn more about the way a person thinks, talks, cajoles, expresses anger from letters than from any other research tool.

And don't just read letters that have been transcribed by someone else into a book. **Go to the original.** Touch the yellow, crumpled or lavender soaked paper. **Study the handwriting.** Try copying a letter in that hand. Is it large or small? Are the characters exactingly shaped or do they look like chicken scratches? **What does that tell you about the person, about the period?**

Are there just a few original letters available or many? Is this chance? Did the correspondent hate to write letters or find the letter a capacious vessel in which to pour all thoughts and feelings.? Did he or she toss letters to the wind or secure them in a vault, knowing somehow that history was being made.

Remember:

You are tracking clues to the past and every scrap of cloth or paper, every captured phrase and intonation, every physical as well as imaginary journey — to a cemetery, to a meandering river bed, to a library — will help make your recreation of history credible. By **immersing yourself in the period and the person,** the facts will become a form to fight against, a way of forcing you to wrestle with the demands of genre and craft and an incentive to invent new facts, new designs, new colors to add where memory and evidence fails.

George Garrett, poet, biographer, playwright, and author of two historical novels about the Elizabethan period, explains it this way, in the introduction to his novel *The Succession: A Novel of Elizabeth and James:*

"It began with the letters — first with the actual letters" between Queen Elizabeth and her subsequent heir, James VI of Scotland. But in trying to recreate two splendid characters, "I was forced to summon up many others to help me, ghosts from that time, some of them 'real' (Sir Robert Cecil, the Earl of Essex), and some of them 'imaginary' — a messenger, a priest, a player, some Scots reivers, etc. And very soon it was clear that if they were to bear witness, they must be allowed to tell their own tales also. They jostled each other for places in the story."

Thus Garrett remained **faithful to the facts while preserving the freedom of fiction,** which also means, in this case, inserting poems which are dramatic monologues (like those we wrote "speaking through the mask") right into the plot of the story , and knowing in his body that **when truly writing in history, "there may be distortions and there will be mistakes, but there are no lies."**

Writing When you have **the past and the person in your body,** you will *have to write,* you will *have to tell* your story, **keeping to the facts, as long as they do not contradict the "truth."**

Write a story, long or short, using the historical period as setting, and your new historic skin, bones, body as focal character. Speak in character, through the mask, as you did in Chapter Nine, or narrate (tell) the story in the third-person-omniscient point of view (See Chapter Eleven).

Daisy Brown Has Come for Tea

How'd-ya do Mrs. Underhill; It was such a lovely walk across the moor. How's the Vicar's rheumatiz? Have yu' started on the jumble yet? Might just find some nice articles to help. When are your grandchildren coming to visit? Dulcie and Merry will be next week. They'll be enjoyin' the new pups out in the mews. Our Agnes tells me she'll be increasin' this fall. . . . These tarts is especially good. And your flower garden is just gorgeous.

Carrie Coffee
Miami Senior Citizens Center
Oklahoma

Write a play — a one-person play, or one involving several characters — **building each scene out of the conflict:**

between your main historical character and others whom he or she knew;

Or create moments of conflict:

between people and their setting (i.e. the weather): for example, "This outrageous storm is shaking me to the core!"

Or **between conflicting ideas:**

"These Federalists are not any better than the British. High Tories and profiteers to boot!"

"Mind your manners, my dear, and look at the facts. If we don't have a strong central government this country will end up in poverty and division."

Or **between the individual as he or she confronts society.**

Though we cannot, because of limitations of space, deal extensively with playwriting in this "Guide," you will create an effective piece if you remember that **"conflict"** is what **makes the audience attentive** to what is going on on stage — **even little conflicts** like someone wrestling with her purse, or cursing his cane — **and the resolution of one particular conflict** (let's say she finally gets her purse open and finds her keys) **is what allows us to move on** to the next event — which is, of course, a conflict — the key won't fit the lock, etc.

Write a poem. Though **you may continue to use free-verse** here (unrhymed poems whose line length, sound pattern and rhythm are created in collaboration with the subject), and **you may also want to write** "persona" poems, **"speaking through the mask."** — this may be a good time to **use traditional verse forms, since those forms too are part of our history.**

Find a book of traditional verse forms and choose one that is appropriate to the period you are re-creating, the sonnet form, for example, if you are writing about the 16th century. (See Chapter Eleven) Or merely choose a traditional form **to help you re-create a historic person, place, fact** — because you like it.

Here is a Shakespearean Sonnet, written through the mask of Will Shakespeare, that involved research and a great sense of fun:

William Shakespeare Sues
Mistress Rheam for Plagiarism

"Sblood, do you think I am
easier to be placed on than
a pipe that you should use my
language as your own?"

Haven't I danced attendance long enough?
(I'm not exactly in my salad days.)
If we're *to split* — O, *come, shake it off* —
You're *Greek to me* in all your ways.
If I should *wear my heart upon my sleeve*
Would you show some *milk of human kindness?*
Men are men, you say. You make me grieve.
Love is blind? Then I'm in love with blindness.
If I say *trippingly upon the tongue*
The question is: *to be* my love, *or not to be*
(We could be merry as the day is long)
Or — are you just a *note in my book of memory?*
Answer me in one word and then *I'll tell*
The world "All's well that ends well."

Florence Lee Rheam
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Note: Words in italics are direct quotes from Shakespeare.

from Stumbling Out

I.

I am full of days
days that lifted to drop — days
that thrust through clay and sand
and rock . . .

The old are pioneers in a land
where vision fades and voices blur:
. . . a poem that refuses to end

Pearl Minor
"Old People: A Season of the Mind,"
Nimrod

Here is a more traditional poem, rhymed, but creating its own pattern:

Upon an April Evening

Upon an April evening
my love and I went walking,
with rainbows on our lashes
and diamonds in our hair.
Under one umbrella,
arm in arm we huddled,
splashing through silver-puddled
paths that led nowhere.

Our lips alive with laughter,
we vowed that ever after
we'd always walk together,
whether in rain or shine,
until the end of time.

Now on a rainy evening
my heart recalls the essence
of April, and his presence
is by my side again.
I thank the April weather
that blesses our life together,
and dream that Paradise will bring
Reunion in the rain.

Goldie Capers Smith
Tulsa, Oklahoma

And here, out of the past, an unrhymed "free-verse" poem:

Out of the Past

The day was hot with not a cloud for momentary shade.
We were driving, my aged father and I,
Through the sparsely-settled area of northern Oklahoma
To visit his sister at Liberal, across the line in Kansas,
First turning off to Minneola, where he, almost a man,
Had lived in the later 1880's.

The buzzard, sitting motionless on a corner fence post,
Spread his wings and soared, gliding and dipping
Near us. Was he lonely?

The level land abruptly ended.
Low, eroded hills appeared and through the gap,
A narrow canyon split the earth.
My father straightened as memories stirred,
"There was a little lake there at the right," he said.
"They could never find the bottom.
I guess the road's been changed."
Then, reflectively, "They find out now
The things they want to know."

We soon left this rugged stretch behind
And on the road's horizon mirages shimmered,
Like water beneath the brazen sky,
Receding with our speed.

The buzzard dipped before us.
Then soon was but a disappearing speck,
He had reached his territory's end.

"When the railroad came," my father mused,
"I worked with team and shovel on the roadbed,
Drove forty miles to get my pay,
Two dollars fifty cents a day, and board my . . ."
But I had heard it all before, too many times.
(He had no ear for our youthful aspirations.)
Sensing my inattention, he slumped a bit, And his fine old eyes grew bleak.

If he were here I would listen.

Florence Hayes Monahan

You might want to try this instead: Begin a poem or story **about your own history** with the phrase: "My mother used to tell me . . ." or "My father always told us . . ."

My Mother Used to Tell Me

when she was a little girl
her father and her grandfather
lived on a farm
and they owned a maple sugar grove
and they made maple sugar,
and she told me one time
that they put it in wooden tubs
to cool
and to harden
and to sugar
and ummmummm.
Well, they had an old
hound dog. Something every night
would destroy a tub of their sugar
and they couldn't figure
out what it was.
Grandfather, he laid way one night
and found that it was his hound
that was destroying the sugar
and while my grandfather was in the maple grove
he caught some little red birds
and brought them to my mother and her sister
and they put them in a cage
and they hung them
out in the tree
and the mother bird
would come and feed them
and finally one morning
she fed them poison berries
and later that day
they found them all dead.

She would rather have them all dead
than see them in captivity.

Clare Crussel
Tulsa Center for the Physically Limited

My Father Used to Tell Us the Story

MY FATHER USED TO TELL US THE STORY
about the little frogs:
A farmer had put his milk
into the milk cans
and set them beside the road
for the dairy man to pick up
and as he set one can down
the lid came loose
and a little later, two little frogs
jumped onto the tops of those milk cans.
The lid turned sideways
and the first little frog
said: "Oh dear me
I will never get out of here,"
and he did not try.
So he went to the bottom
of the can.
But the other little frog
he kicked and he kicked
and he . . . kept trying.
And in the morning
when the dairy man
picked up the can,
he noticed that the lid was loose
and when he opened the can
there sat the one little green frog
on top of a pat of butter.

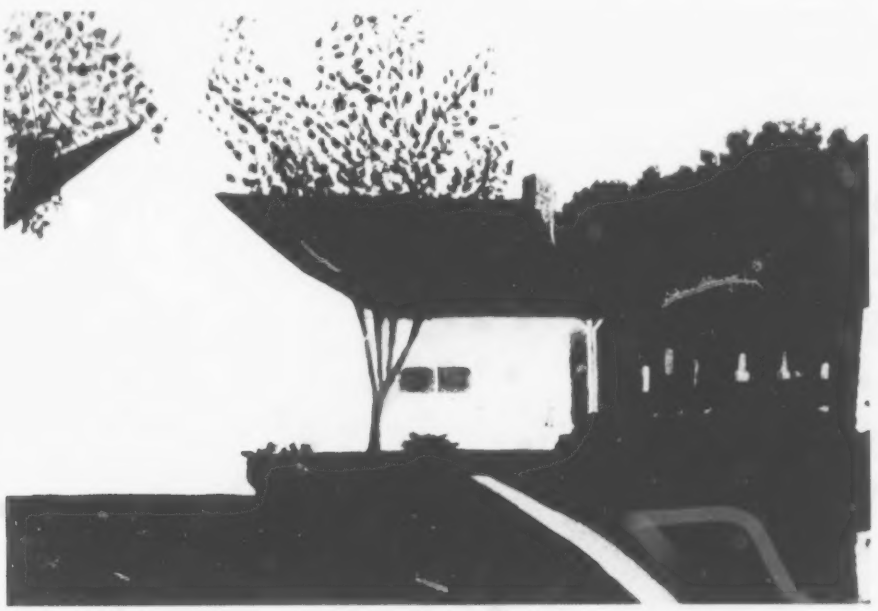
So the moral was:
"Don't ever give up — keep kicking!"

Ursel Thompson
Tulsa Center for the Physically Limited

Drawing on History

The memories we have of the past often sleep inside us. Then something happens, a word is spoken, we smell fresh bread baking, or taste wild strawberry jam, or see a white farm house — and it is as if those memories awaken, come to life. *We want to explore them, to follow them to ever greater aliveness, to capture them and imprint them for our children and grandchildren and we can do this by writing about our past and by drawing, painting, and making collages that capture our past.* We bring the sleeping images, the half-remembered, the flat and unused parts of our lives forward. They become clear as we recreate them.

We do the same when we research history in books and papers. We look for the one or two "telling" images, the ones that epitomize an age: the Betsy Ross flag with its circle of thirteen stars; a circle of wagon-trains; a woman in an organdy gown with many petticoats and a parasol; a man with a bear skin draped over his shoulders and a club in his hand.



Rosalie Taylor, Miami, Oklahoma

from 3:30 a.m.

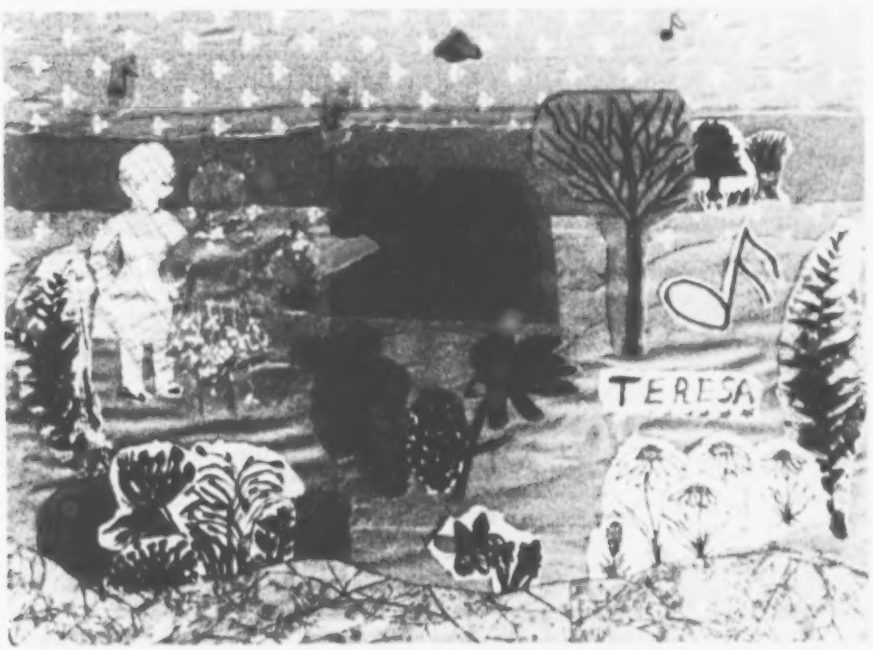
This is the winter scene
I know by heart,
the late moon's acid
fusing black to bronze,
glazing snow china white. . .

Margaret J. Smith
"Old People: A Season of the Mind"
Nimrod

drawing Make a **seed drawing or painting** as you did in Chapter Six. Only this time let your seed be an indicator of a vivid moment from your own past or a historical period you are researching and recreating in your costuming and physical space. The seed could be a thumbnail sketch of a vivid memory of your father shoeing a horse or bending over a holy book, your grandmother dancing in the woods or on a stage. The seed could be, instead of a sketch, a torn piece of an old letter or page of a diary, a piece of a quilt, a fragment of a satin skirt . . .

Whatever the seed, glue it down; study it; feel it; and let the painting or drawing emerge from that seed. Let it grow, perhaps with other details from the past moment you have clutched to you. Let it grow in expected and unexpected and unusual ways.

You might want to make a **collage of history**: Select scraps of fabric, letters, diaries, buttons, ribbons, pressed flowers that speak of your past or the historical period that you want to capture. Experiment with the arrangement of these materials and any additional marks you wish to add until you have an arrangement that pleases you and seems to focus the elements you feel are most important. Then glue it all down.



Teresa Ingersoll, Pryor, Oklahoma

Composition

You will remember in Chapter Five, the "cut-up," that not only what we selected to cut out of the magazine, but how these "pieces" were arranged on the page created a shape and enforced or detracted from the meaning. Part of that meaning was a result of what we left out as well as what we put in, and **part of that meaning was a result of the space or background that we were arranging within a certain limitation or frame as we placed the words and lines.** Using a short line, composed of very few words or strokes, might suggest a thoughtful speaker, a man or a woman "of few words," an artistic expression that is spare, clean, upright. If this minimal expression exists within a lot of space or background it would add to making the details seem airy, seem to breathe. Using a long line, filled with the loops and angles of descriptive phrases, complex details piled one on another with little space around them might suggest fussiness, heaviness, an absorption with things.

A Consideration: "If there is any poetry here," said famous American poet, Robert Bly, "it is in the space between the lines." Poetry, art — the shapes of our meanings — are created not only by what we say or what we draw or paint but by what we don't say, what we deliberately choose to leave out, and by the relationship between the line of words, or the drawn line and the frame in which it is contained. **Space too may be eloquent.**

Artists call this very meaningful space, "negative space" — an unfortunate term. **That "negative" space, that space inbetween the lines, that space that constitutes pieces of background, those unexpressed words, those shapes that are a result of what we put in as it relates to a physical frame, or a mental frame of reference is what we are concerned with in the next section.**

All white space = negative shape
All black space = chair = positive shape

Draw the Air Not the Chair: Framing As It Affects the Shape of Space

drawing

You will need a pencil and typing or drawing paper.

Using the chair picture included here, trace it or photo-copy it and then on your paper create a frame for the chair, allowing the frame to touch the chair in two or three or four places.

Now you are ready to begin the real work of an artist.

Look carefully at the white spaces between the rungs and sides of the chair. When you can see them as shapes, draw them one at a time on another piece of paper. **Do not draw the chair, draw the white-space, the "negative-space" and its shapes.**

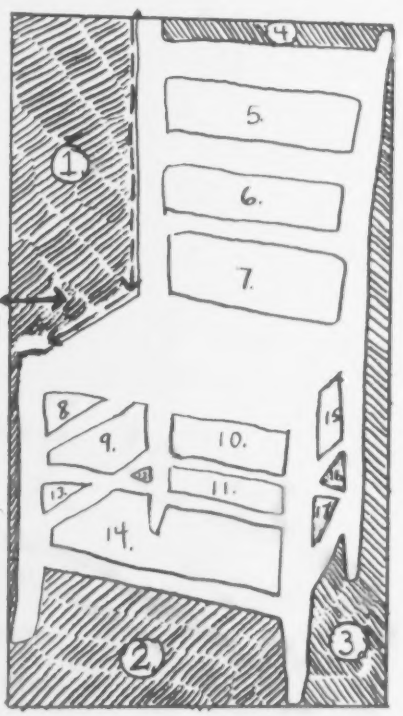
It is easiest to begin with the outside white spaces.

Once you have started a side shape, all others will be compared to this and to the top and bottom of the frame you draw. Remember:

Talk to yourself. Describe the shape as you are now beginning to see it: "this shape has a slight angle compared to the side of the frame." "This shape begins halfway down the side and ends about one inch from the bottom," etc.

Notice how in numbers 5 through 17 the negative spaces are determined by the chair . . . but negative spaces 1 through 4 are determined by the frame or size/shape of the canvas or paper you choose to work on.

Compare all angles, shapes, lengths of line to the sides and top, bottom of your frame. Notice that this side shape begins about 1" across the top and changes direction almost halfway down the side of the picture.



Try some of the following ideas to get more practice with this method:

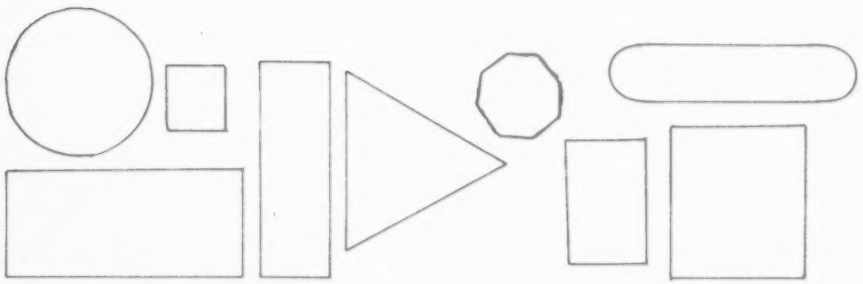
Draw the negative-space shapes that surround a human figure from a photograph of your own or from a magazine. Try to select a figure that is moving or positioned in a complex way, such as a dancer, a baseball player, someone digging. **Be sure to draw your frame to match the size of the photo being copied.**

Hint! Try turning the photo **upside-down** before drawing the negative shapes (described in the next section). Then you will begin to see as an artist sees — not body and its surroundings but body **shapes** and space **shapes.** (For more information on these techniques see Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain.*)

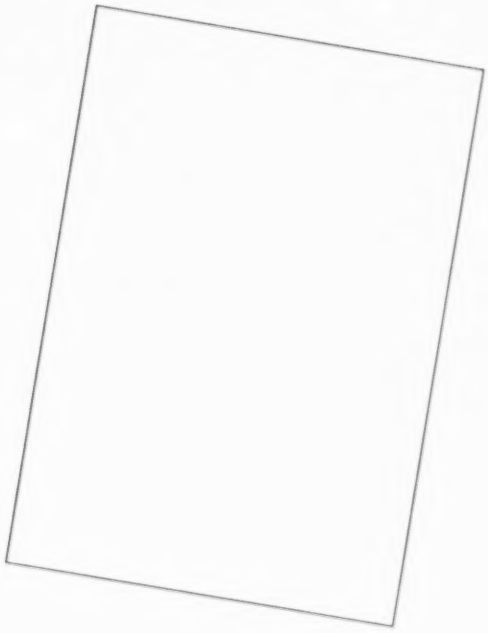
How An Artist Thinks and Sees: Try an Upside-Down View

Before beginning any drawing or painting, you need to decide what size and shape of paper or canvas you want to work on and the size and shape of the frame you wish to work within that canvas. The frame or "format" directly affects your composition or arrangement. You may draw your format with a ruler before beginning to draw a subject or design. An easy way to make your art more interesting and challenging is to use an unusual format or frame (see the examples below).

Looking at these examples, imagine putting a tree in each frame or format. Notice how you would have to change the shape and position of the tree to deal with the special shape of the frame. Try a few sketches of the same tree in each of the different formats.



Frame touches the picture 3 places



Next **turn the line drawing upside-down** and begin to **draw what you see. Work from the bottom of the drawing to the top.** Notice how the lines connect with one another, notice where they touch and most importantly, where they are placed in relationship to the horizontal and vertical edges of the format or frame that you made.

Talk to yourself about the angle of a line in relationship to the straight edge of the format or frame. **If you start trying to identify and name parts of the man,** for example, so that you are saying: "Here is the head . . . here the hand," **Stop Yourself — gently!** Resume looking at how the lines curve, where they cross others, make a little shape here, etc.

When you have completed this line drawing, try another drawing using the same method.

This way of talking to yourself while you draw is critical to better drawing. This exercise teaches you how an artist thinks and sees. Be patient and try this several times until you find yourself **seeing and talking in terms of lines, shapes, formats, frames** — rather than in terms of known objects or body parts. When this happens, your work will show greater accuracy, but having an exact likeness is not the main purpose. **Your objective should be to see with clarity!**

Space, Frame, Person as Point of View

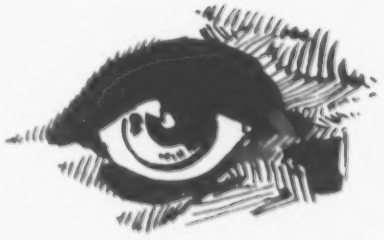
writing Most people who approach writing for the first time think and talk about their writing in terms of its subject. The professional writer knows that it is impossible to speak of a subject in isolation. The subject is seen in a frame. And between that frame and its subject lie varying degrees of space, rich space filled with meaning, as we discussed earlier.

When we speak of the "frame" of a piece of writing, we may be referring to all or any one of three aspects of framing:

The framed shape or form that the subject will take on as it emerges within a particular space as a result of the writing process (described later in this chapter);

The frame as setting;

The frame as point of view, or angle of vision from which the story or poem is seen and told.



If, for example, I write from the **first person, the "I" or eye-witness point of view,** what can be seen and described in the story or poem is limited to what it is possible and probable for that "I" to see:

If the "I" is an all seeing and knowing being — anything is possible and would seem probable. The narrator, story-teller, eye-witness — the "I" of the poem or story can know what each character is seeing and doing, feeling, thinking. The "I," in this instance, can "see" what happened in China on June 10, 1940 and in Prague, Oklahoma on that same date, can "hear" the thoughts of Mao Tse Tung as well as his or her own thoughts.

Or **the "I" narrator can limit** his or her own view **by turning inward** so she becomes her own subject, and knows only self and its thoughts.

Limitations (frames of reference and vision) also exist for the "I" narrator depending upon character and age and personality. If the "I," for example, is a child, we have imposed that limitation of years and experience, that "frame" on our piece of writing. The child cannot know and see more than is appropriate or probable for his age and situation or our belief in the narrator's voice is shaken; the piece of writing doesn't seem to have authority, doesn't seem to emerge from a trustworthy voice and being who you would follow on a narrative or sensate journey.

In each viewpoint something is gained in terms of focus or lost in terms of inclusiveness. So too when narrating in the third person.

We can speak in the third person from the omniscient (the all seeing) point of view as well as in the first person. By

eliminating the "I" as the teller and speaking in the third person — "It came to pass . . ." — the narrator is almost a historian of events that happened in the past, an unseen, non-participating observer, investigator, recounter. And, in this choice of third person omniscience too, we are deciding for the reader through which frame he or she will receive the materials of the story. The account could seem, without excessive intrusion (i.e. "she said boldly and brilliantly," or "the room was tinged with warm light like a heavenly embrace") on the part of the all seeing, all knowing narrator, more objective and wider in scope.

> Everything was in confusion in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Brown. Jeffry was thinking that it was about time someone paid attention to him, and Molly was begging with her every look for the slightest sign of notice from her father, Walter. But both mother and father were thinking of no one except themselves and they were deep into an argument over car payments, lockouts at the factory and their growing distance from each other. Neither could foresee that before the next day a tragedy would strike this ordinary family that would make their present concerns trivial — even unreal.

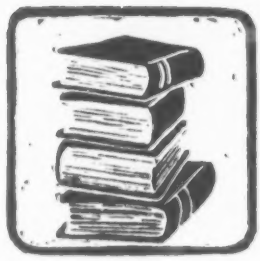
Though the third person omniscient point of view can provide the writer with an easy entry into all the minds and actions of his characters while at the same time giving the writer a possibility for more description and interpretation, and a broader canvas — **the third person omniscient point of view also has its limitations.** Without a narrowing of focus (as if the action were seen through the eyes of one person or the other) there can be a feeling of scattered attention to a scene and to a situation.

To avoid this pitfall, in the above example, though the description starts broad "everything was in confusion," and we know what each member of the family is thinking, **the focus narrows** by the end of the paragraph so that we are beginning to see only over the shoulder of the parents and to concentrate not on all that "confusion" but on the "tragedy" that is to strike.

And were we to narrow that focus still more, and continue to tell the story still in the third person but as if we were looking only over the shoulder of the father, could only feel what he felt, see what he saw, understand what he understands, we would now be telling the story from the **"third person limited focus"** point of view and again we would have altered our frame, imposed certain limitations, etc., but also gained a clarity and seeming depth and organizing principle for our materials.

Moreover, the third person limited focus point of view also permits **the inclusion of lines of dialogue** from other characters (as does any narrative view). With this inclusion, the "limits"

imposed by looking only over the shoulder and within the heart of one character are broadened. Information that the focal character cannot or should not know, without destroying his credibility, can be given, in quoted lines of dialogue, by other characters.



Dialogue is particularly useful when writing from the **objective point of view.** Operating like the camera eye, this view **eliminates all narrative comment or interpretation.** The narrator-writer seems to disappear (despite the fact that it is the writer who is selecting and arranging the materials in the reader's view).

Yet the selection of detail and the arrangement of detail and incident makes a commentary of its own, though there is no clearly perceived presence telling the reader what to think or feel.

> There was a bookcase that extended from one end of the wall to the other and from the floor to the ceiling. The books were arranged in their shelves: one shelf for Chinese literature; another shelf for biographies; another for first editions and rare bindings; and still another for poets of the Renaissance and plays of the seventeenth century. Also on some shelves, objects of art: vases in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors, polished stones, a sculpture in wood and steel — nested in gaps the books did not fill.

What do we know about the owner of this bookshelf that has not been openly stated by the narrator? Is he neat or sloppy? What is his profession? Guess. Does he read these books or have them "for show"?

From even this brief discussion one can see that **it is impossible to speak and write well of any subject without being aware of the effects of framing that subject within a particular point of view** and without being aware that the space between the words and the lines, the space that makes us sense that something has been left out, that there is something we can add to the words on the page — this space also is significant.

The following poem also is seen — for the most part — from the **point of view of the camera eye** that moves from one detail to another — merely **listing details — objectively** and **without commentary,** until the last lines. **How does it say what it has to say? Are we convinced that we have reached the "cyclical repossession of ourselves"? What, if anything, convinces us?**

Eureka Springs

(Mother's Day 1979)

Making our way
through rocks and stones
houses and churches
there is always
some one
some man or madonna
some tree thick hill
some green corner of land
some road or cool cave
some wheatblown prairie . .

There is some one
or thing:
some rock
carved with our name
some stone
smoothed by fingers
wet with tears
some Victorian house
with myriad pictures
of clever ladies
and dried thistle in pots
some lavender room draped in lace
curtains and hungry fans
some stained-glass window
casting green rosebuds
on a weathered face.

Some white church
holding up red tiles to the sun
— some hot band of sun —
some trickle of cool water
some impossible blue glaze
some word.

There is
some elephant man
his huge head filled with dreams
he cannot tell
some grotesque whose skin
hangs like volcanic ash
some stunted hand
that suddenly reaches out
some delicate hand
that traces the bones of our face
some soft hair that fills
each palm with sky.

There is some pale boy arranging toy soldiers in the dust
some bearded boy
carving giant dinosaurs from the sand
some soft breeze
some two days
some thrust of rock.

There is
some dwarf wearing a shroud
as a nightgown
galloping in the waves.
There is some grandmother
leaping bubbling tarns.
There is some great bald head singing arias from Verdi
some small mockingbird
chirping in the dusk
some mouth
that tongues your hand
some warm babe
that curls to your breast.

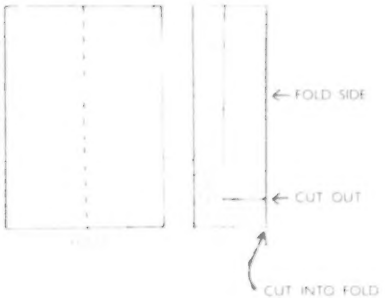
And there is always
one perfect round stone
one deep red radish
your garden
to bring us
once again
to that cyclical
repossession
of ourselves
for which we give thanks.

—F. N. Leffler

"Ls" for Cropping:

A simple device for creating a format or frame for photographs or your own drawings, is a cropping or framing tool called an "L."

To make the "L," fold in half — the long way — a piece of large black construction paper (18" x 24"), and draw a capital "L" about 2 inches wide, with the open edge of the paper serving as one edge of the long side of the "L." Cut out the "L," slashing open the one short edge that was the fold.



You now have two identical "Ls" to use as framing tools. They may be shifted to change the size and shape of the opening formed by placing one "L" upside-down overlapping the other.

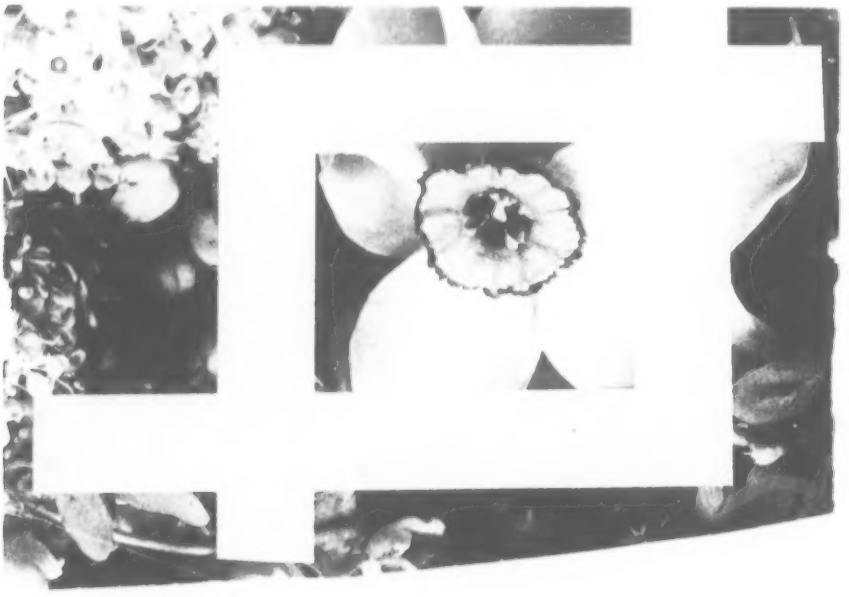
Detail Hunting:

Select some photographs of subject matter that is exciting to you. Use a black and white photograph (it is easier to see), but color is all right too.

Place your "Ls" to frame or crop different areas of the photo, changing the size of the opening created by the "Ls," until you discover a composition and arrangement you like.

Now using this framed and cropped section as a model, on another piece of paper or on a canvas, enlarge (blow-up) these cropped images to full-sized drawing, paintings or collage of your own.

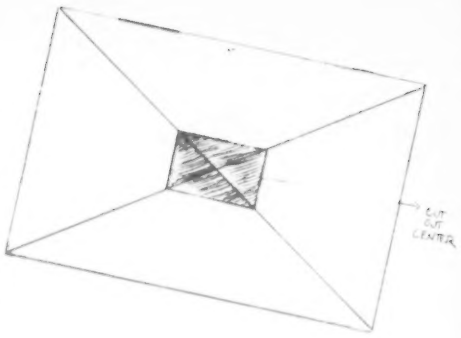
Here is an example of a cropped photo used to make a "blown-up" picture of a small detail. (You might also enjoy looking at the work of Georgia O'Keefe for other examples of this way of working.)



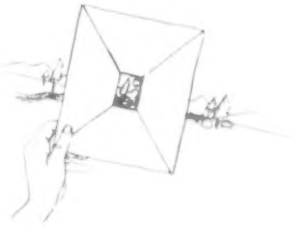
Interested in "live" subject matter? Try this!

Make a View Finder:

On a large index card (4 inch x 6 inch) draw two diagonal lines from one corner of the card to the other, crossing in the center. Now, draw a **rectangle** which overlaps the center of the cross and **cut it out. You now have a view-finder.**



Hold the view-finder at arms length and look through it to "frame" a view so that you can see the spaces that surround an object more clearly as shapes in themselves (as you did with the chair exercise earlier in this chapter). Use your view-finder to frame objects like: any part of a landscape, your bedroom, a complex plant, an ironing board, an eggbeater, etc.



Look at the object, positioning the view-finder opening so that it seems to touch on three sides of your subject — you may need to close one eye to see this more clearly.

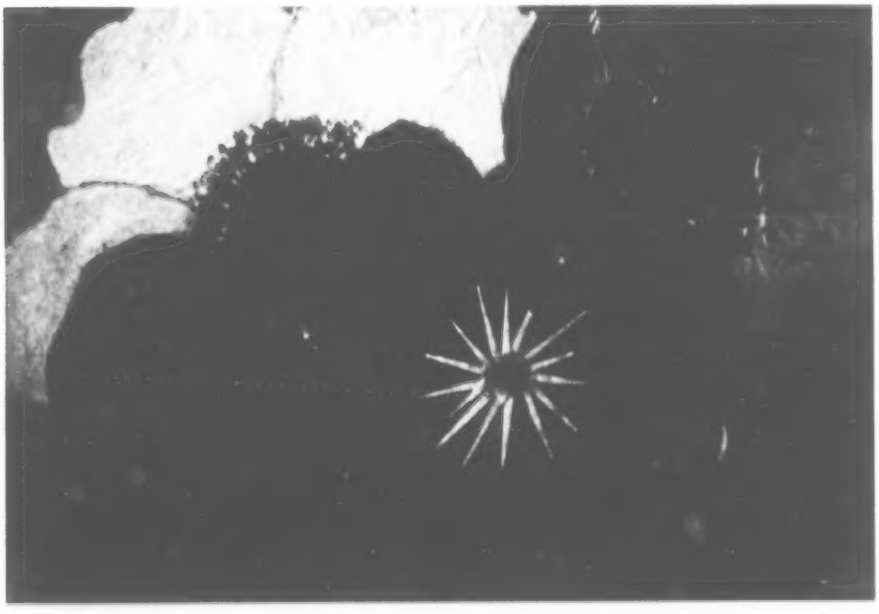
Gaze through the view-finder until you can see the spaces around and within your subject as shapes.

On another sheet of typing or drawing paper, make a rectangular format/frame.

Look at your paper and imagine seeing once again the spaces-as-shapes. Remember, think of the edges of the view-finder as the edges of the format you drew on your paper.

Now, draw only the shapes of the spaces you captured in your view- finder, one after another. Do all the outer shapes first. Don't try to copy the object; draw the shapes as you see them.

Remember your artist way of talking: "What is the direction of that angle compared to the side of the view-finder?" You might ask yourself. Or, "What is the shape, the angle, the length of the



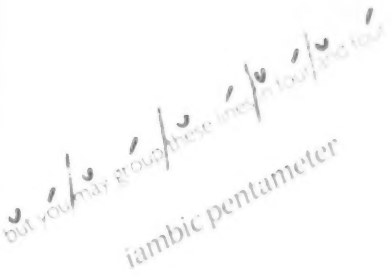
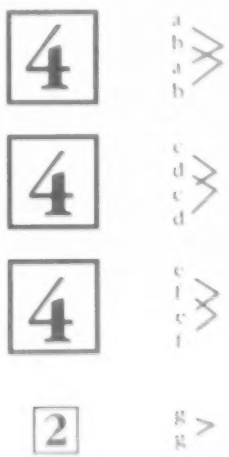
Irene, Blanchard, Oklahoma

line compared to the vertical sides and horizontal top and bottom of the view-finder?

Everything you need to know is right there, perfectly available to you, when you see and ask questions of yourself and the world.

Frames of Poetry

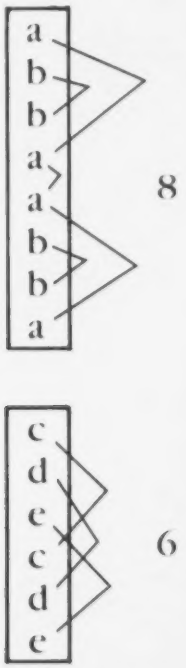
writing

In traditional (formal) poetry too we have frames — frames of form, not rectangles or squares or triangles but *sonnets* or *villanelles* or *sestinas*, etc. Oddly enough, these **traditional forms** do have observable frames or shapes. For example, a sonnet is always 14 lines of iambic pentameter (or roughly 10 syllables in each line in a pattern alternating one stressed syllable, one unstressed),* but you may group these lines in four and four and four and two, or four and four and three and three, depending on whether you wish to write an Elizabethan (English or Shakespearean) sonnet or a Petrarchan (Italian) sonnet. Here are the observable shapes of a Shakespearean sonnet, grouped according to lines which also form an end-word rhyme pattern. (The last word (a) in the first line, rhymes with the last word (a) in the third line; (b) rhymes with (b) etc.



** Don't get overly concerned with metrics, stresses and such. Though we try to adhere to a form, the intuitive music of the poem is of the greatest importance.*

Here is another way of shaping a sonnet, the Petrarchan sonnet way: two groups of four lines each that have the same rhyme scheme, *abba abba*, and two groups of three lines each whose rhyme scheme varies but is usually, *cde cde*.

You might want to consult a book of traditional verse forms to see the various frames available to you which tradition has established. It is often helpful in writing to have a form to fight against . . . a form to play with . . . a form that pulls words and thoughts and ideas from you because the form is always demanding another rhyme, another frame to fill.



Even "free verse" has, as you have seen, its form or frame — a frame that is created not before the writings as with traditional forms such as a sonnet, but **a frame that emerges from the relationship of the subject to its rhythm, sound and line patterns.** In this poem, note how everything — space, punctuation, capitalization — is used to help the reader get a full experience of the subject and statement of the poem. Ultimately, that "everything" — the typography working with the words — creates a shape, **a frame that the poem draws as it is written** and read, and not beforehand.

The Flying Bed

Miles above it
you can really love this world.
Darling! I cry to the fields.
My own! echoes across the fleece.
Even asphalt

looks delicious. Up here
we are all lovers, we who know
by soaring:
larks, kites, comets, and
this bed.

We'll head south,
prepare for paradise —
I'll wash golden plates
and you'll put out
the astral debris.

We'll dress in asbestos —
lookalike suits
with foolproof zippers
guaranteed to open
when we catch fire.

Either that or,
landed, we'll settle down, and
intransigent as tulip bulbs,
paperskinned,
sweat out the winter.

Nina Nyhart,
"Old People, a Season of the Mind"
Nimrod

And here is a 17th-century rhymed poem that becomes the shape of its subject: wings.

Easter Wings

Lord, Who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:

With thee
O let me rise,
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day Thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne;
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thine.

With Thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day Thy victorie;
For, if I imp my wing on Thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

George Herbert, 1633

And remember that rain poem trickling down the page?

Setting as Frame

Another way to think about **space** in regard to writing is to remember that **all things exist in relationship;** they are not isolated. The old grandmother you want to write about is **seen clearly only in the frame** of her kitchen. It is in the kitchen that she reveals her full being; it is her **setting.** To show her most vividly, we pretend, therefore, that we are not only seeing her in her kitchen, but that we are peering through the window of that kitchen and watching her expert motions as she pours the warm

milk and egg over the stale bread to create her famous bread-pudding. And as we **peer through that window,** we write down **only what we can see through that frame. Many things that are in that kitchen must be left out.** We cannot include each spoon, each ingredient, each gesture, each thought that goes into her recipe for life. We select and write about only the significant gesture, only the most important details — that somehow in that arch of warm milk, in that act of pouring is the essence of her life.

What we leave out, the space between "the pouring" and the "hand that pats your shoulder," is the space for the reader to fill in, to participate, to add his own memories and dreams and images. That is why we can say that the poem is inbetween the lines. The space filled with suggestion, with possibilities implied by what is placed before and after the space — this space reverberates like a taut rawhide drum.

A Door

A door is a very useful thing.
You can shut out people.
You can shut out sound.
Or you can open it wide and let the sun shine in
and let in the loved ones who want to visit you.
Our house has many doors,
a door for every room, some solid wood,
some with glass in them, bedroom doors
and bathroom doors. When they are closed,
it's for a purpose. Like the three room-doors
upstairs. We keep them closed,
closing in all that stuff piled in those rooms:
Christmas decorations, old clothes, seasonal clothes, spools of yarn, halloween masks from way back,
rag dolls I made 55 years ago (they were pretty).
One thing and another.
A person can't hardly get by without a door.
It keeps out the cold;
it lets in the breezes when it's warm.
Sometimes we lock our doors,
yet we can unlock them.
Without a door,
we wouldn't have any way
to enter in.

Margaret May
Tulsa Center for the Physically Limited

Windows

When I look out the window
(and don't we all have windows)
it reminds me that
our eyes
are the windows
for our bodies.
I look out everyday.

Mary Granger
Tulsa Center for the Physically Limited

writing Write a short poem — free verse (you don't have to rhyme; let the length of the line help to create the rhythm) — or a letter — or a paragraph or two that is a LOVE LETTER, or a LOVE POEM, or LOVE PARAGRAPHS . . . but — and here is the **kicker — don't mention it!**

If you select your details carefully, the details of a relationship, the incidents, the particular piece of clothing that is remembered, the droop of a shoulder or tap of a foot will speak of "love" without mentioning love or fondness or the words "nice," "interesting," "wonderful," or "kind." (The last four words should be stricken from your writing vocabulary.)

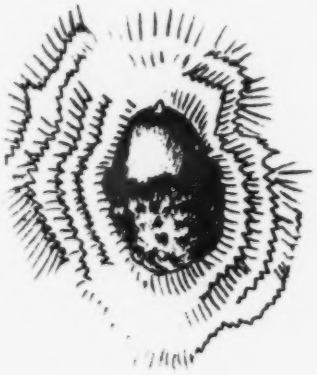
Additional writing: Try rewriting the paragraph about Mr. and Mrs. Brown and their children. Write first **as if you were Jeffry,** age 10, speaking about this moment in his family's life from his point of view: "I noticed the mess our house was in . . ." etc.

Second: Rewrite the first paragraph about the Browns as if you were a camera, merely seeing one thing after another . . . and not making any comment.

Putting it All Together

Working in a Series

In this section, we are going to pull together a few of the suggestions made in previous chapters so that we can see how different approaches transform the same subject and how many techniques are often at work at the same time. Once again, we'll begin by rooting in the physical.



physical Stand with your feet parallel, about a relaxed shoulder width apart, toes pointed forward. Take two or three very slow, deep breaths. Do some gentle head and shoulder and arm and wrist rolls. Then slowly press your arms away from your body reaching for the walls with your hands. Shake out your arms and hands. Shake out your legs. Breathe deeply again, slowly, quietly.

Let your breathing return to normal as you fix your attention on one object in the room. **Stare at this one object until it "releases for you,"** until it begins to say "write about me!" until the object storms your senses with memories of the past and associations of what might be and what is.

writing **Capture the object,** which has just "released" for you, **in three short** descriptive **lines.**

Ask a friend for a word and reach from those three lines to that word and then **another "given" word,** and perhaps "another."

Switch narrative point of view. If you have been writing about the object in the third person, use the first; if you have been

speaking in the first person, as an older person, switch and speak, narrate, tell — as if you were a child.

Add lines of dialogue that might be spoken by a person other than the already existing narrator. **Use a mask.**

Begin to **explore the historical setting,** the possibilities for placing that object in the past and for developing that past more intensively by adding other objects, persons, and events appropriate to it.

Add fragments of diary or journal entries.

You might end up with a long poem, a series of shorter related poems, a story, long or short — and it will have all emerged from one object, one subject that said "write about me."

drawing

Select a simple subject, like a tree or another object from nature, of find a photograph of that object. **Begin with a "blind" or "modified blind" contour** drawing of that subject.

Next **try a haiga-like drawing** of that subject, trying to capture its intrinsic nature or unique quality.

Follow this with a black and white study of a portion of the subject. (Use your "Ls" or view-finder to isolate this portion.) Focus on degrees of dark and light, on shading and rounding.

Next try a "limited color study" of the same subject (either all of it or a portion). Prepare small amounts or "puddles" of pure white paint, then five shades of grey (by mixing black with white paint), and finally a pure black "puddle." (Be sure to use the black sparingly, it is easy to get it too dark.)

Now choose one color only (red? blue? yellow?) and add it to each puddle until it turns into a color (no longer looking greyish, or pure white, or pure black).

Use these mixtures — ranging from light to dark of the selected single color — to do a color painting of your subject. This is called a **monochromatic study,** meaning a one-color painting.

You might also want to try a **collage of your chosen subject,** cutting, glueing, painting, drawing on the same canvas or paper.

In addition to paint, colored pencils, chalk . . .

Use various kinds of paper: tissue paper, rice paper, wrapping paper, cellophane.

Use other found objects or collected items: ribbon, string, buttons, fabric scraps, old photographs, weeds, bark, horsehair, straw, leaves, shells, petals . . .

Reflections, Revisions, Resources

Looking at Your Own Work

drawing As you are drawing, painting, glueing — working — stop periodically, step back or hang your work on the wall and move away to **study it from a distance** in a relaxed, easy way.

All art is meant to be viewed from a distance greater than our distance from it when we are making it. Turn your work in different directions. Look at it reflected in a mirror.

Ask your self and your work some questions:

Is the main figure or subject large enough?

Did I use colors that best suggested the feeling I wanted to convey?

Did I use the best materials to suggest what I wanted . . .?

Do I need more information, more detail?

Is there another way to draw a picture using the same subject?

Did I fill the page?

Did I use large and small marks for textures?

Would this picture feel better in a different size frame?

Am I just painting what I have seen in other paintings or is this my way?

Did I enjoy myself?

writing After writing a piece, when you feel it is finished, put your work in a drawer for awhile, two weeks would be ideal. Don't touch it. Develop distance from what you have written. You will come back to it fresh; you will read it when it returns to you as if it had been written by someone else. And you will easily see where it succeeds best, where it needs clarification, elaboration, etc.

Let the work speak to you

In both drawing and writing **distance will allow the work to speak to you** about what it needs and whether it is finished or not. Respond freely to the call of the work. **Be willing to give up an old idea,** if the lines drawn or the colors emerging lead you to a different set of lines and colors, a different shape. **Experiment:** vary your brush stroke, the darkness and lightness of a line. **Be willing,** in your writing, **to change climax** or **resolution,** to alter a **character** or where that character is going. (He may lead you to a different mountain than the one you had originally envisioned.) When, in writing or drawing, you start out to depict your mother, you might give her your aunt's nose, or your grandmother's chin, if that change seems somehow more meaningful or intriguing. **Even just a touch of change might create an entirely new view.**

Experiment!

Experiment and play with your tools over and over again. There is no wrong or right. There is only the continuous discovery of what is natural and right for you and for the full development of your creative expression.

Resources

Your best and first resource is yourself! You will also need some of the following items. You should explore and select supplies that work best for you, though you will want to change and try the unfamiliar and uncomfortable from time to time. In any case — **you do not need everything listed.**

You may explore and select what you like best to work with from the following categories.

Drawing

Doodle Book — Any shape or size you like
Drawing paper — white, tinted charcoal, plain typing or rough newsprint. 18" x 24" is a good size to buy, since you can cut it to any size you want
Black drawing ink and a bamboo brush or crow-quill pen
Charcoal — soft, medium or hard
Colored markers, crayons, colored pencils, pastel chalks and oil crayons (oil pastels).
Pencils — soft (6B, 4B, 2B and hard (2H, 4H, 6H)
Conte crayons — white, black and brown
Masonite drawing board (20" x 26") and a big clip to hold the paper in place while you draw
Masking tape, Elmer's glue, rubber cement
Fixative — workable and permanent
Erasers — for creative rub-outs! gum, pink pearl and kneaded

Collage

Any of the above materials plus your own collection of . . .

Cloth or fabric scraps
Various and unusual kinds of paper — tissue, wrapping, rice, cellophane, aluminum foil, etc.
Various and unusual strings, ribbons, cords, threads, yarns
Magazine photos of close-up objects or people, textures, patterns, colors, interesting words, large and small
Natural objects such as shells, leaves, twigs, cotton, weeds, bark, horsehair — **use your imagination — collect anything that catches your eye or your heart!**

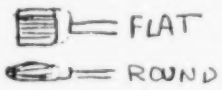
Your own photos of family, friends, animals, places you have visited, places you'd like to visit, things you own or treasure, your house, etc.

Cardboard or illustration board, a matt knife and scissors and glues listed under drawing

Painting

It is easiest to buy an inexpensive kit to start with; otherwise you will need . . .

Paintbrushes of various sizes and shapes, numbers 000 to 12 in both FLATS and ROUNDS.



Oils or acrylics: titanium white, ivory black, alizarin crimson, cadmium red, cadmium yellow, yellow ocher, permanent green, sap green, cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, cerulean blue, burnt sienna, raw umber, burnt umber.

Turpentine, linseed oil (you won't need this if you have chosen acrylic to work in). Mix the oil with the turpentine to dilute the paint so it flows better, about a 50/50 blend.

Canvas boards, or Masonite and gesso if you want to make your own paint surface. Gesso is a white paint required to protect the surface of canvas or wood from soaking up the paint.

An inexpensive color wheel.

An easel, tall or table size.

Masonite or Plexiglas or a cookie sheet for a pallette.

Painting is not emphasized in this first art guide, but it will be the subject of the next, in which all these elements will be explained thoroughly:

Writing

Doodle Book with blank or lined paper; size, shape, color to your liking.

Typing **paper** or Computer Paper or Lined single sheets

Pen? pencil? typewriter? computer? — Be comfortable with your tools!

Tape recorder! Remember, the tape recorder can become your best friend. You need not use an expensive recorder, but do consider a small one that you can carry around or hold in the palm of your hand. Speak your writing into your recorder. Someone else can type or write out what you have spoken.

Then you can revise. Also use the recorder to interview your friends, to collect oral histories, to catch a particular accent or way of speaking (but do ask permission to use the recording, if you are going to).

Become a resource for your community:

Organize poetry readings, storytelling sessions, play readings.

Get together with friends and community organizations and **have an art show.**

Arrange bus trips to area museums (and while you are there write about a painting; or copy a master).

Take your drawings and writings into the public schools and share them with young students. Ask to see and read theirs.

Interest others in drawing, painting, and writing. **Create a collaborative "piece"** toward which several people contribute their writing and painting skills: **A collaborative play** with each person adding a scene — the "Living-Newspaper" idea would do well here, each person contributing an "article," "event," "year;" or make — with a group — **A Quilt, A Tapestry, A Painting for a Wall** that is in bad shape.

MAKE YOUR MARK!

Collaborative Quilt, Senior Initiative Project, Carver Senior Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

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About Pronouns

In the writing of this book, we did not want to use the pronoun "he" each time we referred to the writer or visual artist, since, quite obviously, men and women are equally involved in the creative process. Yet writing "he or she" or "he/she" each time a singular personal pronoun was needed was awkward and cumbersome. We decided, for the sake of smooth reading and accuracy, to alternate pronouns and sometimes use "she" in the inclusive sense, sometimes "he." All writing involves selectivity and making choices.

About the Ages of the Artists

All the writers and visual artists in this book are over 60 (unless otherwise identified). Our assistant editor and a contributing poet, Florence Lee Rheam, never speaks of or thinks of chronological age. (It is suspected that she is over 80.) Calligrapher, Lois Hoagland is 85. Juanita Pena is 84. Clara Crussel is 82. Florence McMahan is 93, Goldie Capers Smith is 95. Francine Ringold is 55, Madeline Rugh, the baby of the group, is 39.

Photographs

Participants in *Making Your Own Mark* workshops have been pictured in photographs found on the pages listed below:

p. ix: Frederick Douglas, Oklahoma City
p. x: Miami, Oklahoma Senior Citizen Workshop Participants and Leader
p. 2: Marie Rentfrow, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 4: bottom, Lilly Mae Keels, Oklahoma City
p. 7: Iva Simpson, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 15: Roy Lee Boyd, Oklahoma City
p. 17: John Carrasco, Oklahoma City
p. 21: Sarah McClusky, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 23: John Carrasco, Oklahoma City
p. 27: Juanita Pena, John Carrasco, Oklahoma City
p. 31: Roy Lee Boyd, Oklahoma City
p. 34: Maxine Taylor, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 37: Johnnie Beard, Jr., Oklahoma City
p. 50: top, Madeline Rugh, Norman Oklahoma; bottom, Minnie V. Anderson, Oklahoma City
p. 51: Jo Isabel, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 52: Maxine Taylor, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 53: Marie Rentfrow, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 55: Fran Ringold, alias "Buster"
p. 56: Iva Simpson, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 57: Rebecca Codd, Oklahoma City
p. 58: Left to right, Alma Knapp, Jo Isabel, Madeline Rugh, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 64: Esperanza Aguilar, Oklahoma City
p. 81: Carrie Coffee, Miami, Oklahoma
p. 96: Minnie V. Anderson, Oklahoma City
p. 97: Jan Janus, Alfreta Ruse, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Photographs by Doug Henderson.

iii: Isaac Bashevis Singer, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, in conversation with author, Francine Ringold, Tulsa, Oklahoma 1976.

viii: Joseph Campbell in conversation with Francine Ringold, California, 1976.

See Stanley Kunitz's chapter "The Wisdom of the Body," in *Next to Last Things: New Poems and Essays* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985) pp. 51-3, and recorded interview with Stanley Kunitz and Francine Ringold for Witter Bynner Foundation radio series with KWGS-FM. University of Tulsa.

Marianne Moore's poem "Poetry" is anthologized in many volumes including *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry,* ed. by Richard Ellman and Robert O'Clair (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), p. 421

May Sarton, *At Seventy: A Journal* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), p. 105.

ix: Oliver Sacks, M.D., *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and other Clinical Tales* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

p. 1: Many writers and artists have spoken of their creative life as a "journey," and a "process" — a "discovery." You might wish to refer to *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* (New York: The Viking Press, 1979-1988) and comments in other journals and texts by Henry Miller, Denise Levertov and others for similar expressions on the creative process.

p. 6: Pablo Picasso in Robert Kaupelis's *Experimental Drawing* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1980).

p. 13: From John Crowe Ransom's "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" in *The Norton Anthology,* p. 435.

p. 13: For more information on contour drawing see Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1979), p. 84.

p. 47: For more information on paint chip hunting and writing in nature see Robert H. McKim, *Experiences in Visual Thinking* (California: Brooks/Cole, 1980), p. 68.

p. 63: We are indebted to Dr. Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain,* for further illuminating the concept of negative space and shadows as shapes on pp.107 and 183 of her book.

Cover Credits:

Back Cover — Top photo: oil on canvas, Marie Rentfrow, Miami, Oklahoma. Bottom photo: collage, collaborative quilt, Carver Senior Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Front Cover: Design by Carl Brune. Photo by Doug Henderson.

Books You May Wish to Refer To
Which We Have Found Useful

Drawing:

Betty Edwards. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain.* Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1979.

Robert Kaupelis. *Experimental Drawing.* New York: Watson-Guptill, 1980.

Robert H. McKim. *Experiences in Visual Thinking.* California: Brooks/Cole. 1980.

Marion Milner. *On Not Being Able to Paint.* New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1979.

Charles Reid. *Painting What You Want to See.* New York: Watson-Guptill, 1987.

Janie Rhyne. *The Gestalt Art Experience.* California: Brooks/Cole, 1973.

J.R. Turner. *Drawing with Confidence.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984.

Writing:

Stanley Burnshaw. *The Seamless Web: Language Thinking, Creature-Knowledge, Art-Experience.* New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1970.

Coda: Poets & Writers Newsletter. "Senior Writers: 'What Used to be Old is Not So Old Anymore.'" February/March 1985, Volume 12, Number 3

Carolyn G. Heilbrun. *Writing a Woman's Life.* New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.

Stanley Kunitz. *Next-to-Last Things: New Poems and Essays.* New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985.

Nimrod: "Old People A Season of the Mind." Edited by Francine Ringold. Tulsa: Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa, 1976, Volume 20, Number 2.

Nimrod: "China Today." Edited by Francine Ringold. Tulsa: Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa, 1986, Volume 29, Number 2.

John Frederick Nims. *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry.* New York: Random House, 1983 (second edition).

Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry. Edited by Richard Ellman and Robert O'Clair. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973.

M.L. Rosenthal. *Poetry and the Common Life.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Oliver Sacks. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and other Clinical Tales.* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

May Sarton. *At Seventy: A Journal.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984.

Women and Aging: An Anthology by Women. Corvallis, Oregon: Calyx Books, 1986.

About the Authors

Madeline M. Rugh is a visual artist and Project Director for the Arts and Older Adults Program with the State Arts Council of Oklahoma. She holds a Masters Degree in Art Education with a Specialist in Aging Certificate and is a Registered Art Therapist, presently completing work toward a doctorate in Adult Education.

Francine Ringold is a poet and playwright and an Artist-in-Residence for the State of Oklahoma. Her specialization is in Very Special Arts and in creative writing with older adults, and she is a consultant for the Oklahoma Arts in Education Department. She has a Ph.D. in English Literature, taught creative writing and contemporary literature for fourteen years at the University of Tulsa, and is the Editor-in-Chief of *Nimrod: International Literary Journal,* with the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel at age 84; Tolstoy learned to ride a bicycle at 69; Lina Prokofiev, at 80, narrated the 50th Anniversary Performance of *Peter and the Wolf* at Lincoln Center. What are you doing for your 70th birthday and beyond?

Age usually enhances intelligence, in part because our store of memories has become so great. Verbal skills too increase. It may take longer to retrieve information but it's there for the retrieving. Seizing attention, demanding concentration, training our memories and shaping data through exercises — like the ones in this book — keep the neurons transmitting, keep us alive!

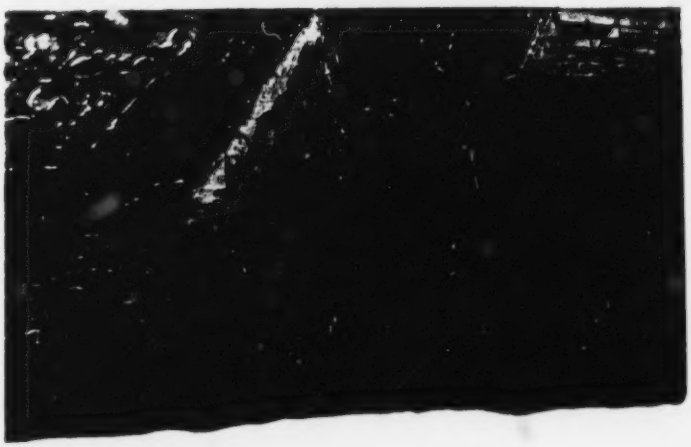
F. Daniel Duffy, M.D.
Professor and Chairman
Department of Internal Medicine
University of Oklahoma
Tulsa College of Medicine

Arts
THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE STATE ARTS COUNCIL OF OKLAHOMA AND THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

~~The~~ Instinct to create remains as long as one breathes.

Isaac Bashevis Singer
Nobel Prize Winning Novelist

And there is always
One perfect round stone
One deep red radish
your garden
to bring us
once again
to that cyclical
repossession
of ourselves
for which we give thanks.



Here is a fine book that doesn't pretend to be more that it is — a guide that shows you many ways into your own creativity. Take it and go; explore to your heart's content!

Manly Johnson, Ph.D.
Professor of Creative Writing
and Contemporary Literature
The University of Tulsa
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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